A MILITARY HISTORY OF THE WAR

CAPTAIN
CECIL BATTINE

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FROM THE DECLARATION OF WAR TO THE CLOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN OF AUGUST 1914

BY

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PREFACE

The author of this brief history, which attempts a description of the opening phase of the great war, was in Brussels when the Belgian capital capitulated to the Germans. Thence he followed the retreat of the Anglo-French forces and saw something of the operations on the left flank of that vast array, and was able to hear the accounts of some of the principal actors in the drama while their experiences were still fresh, besides profiting by his own experiences at the theatre of war.

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CHAPTER I

THE GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN ARMIES

On August 1st, 1914, the sun set on Europe divided by the fiercest and most momentous conflict which has threatened civilisation since the fall of the Roman Empire. On the one side the Empires of Germany and Austria, and on the other Britain, France, and Russia, with the partial assistance of Japan, were arrayed in opposite camps. The line of demarcation would also have been drawn between the neutral States of Europe, but prompted in most cases by the instinct of self-preservation, these countries have sought to preserve their neutrality as long as possible. Of the smaller countries, Serbia and Belgium alone were involved at the beginning, and Belgium most unwillingly.

A comparison between the area, population, commerce, and material resources generally of the contending States shows that a great preponderance of strength was arrayed against the Central Powers; in England it was assumed that nothing but prompt and decisive victory gained by skilful use of their interior position could save them from political destruction. As the war progressed, this disparity of unorganised strength became more and more apparent. Germany was soon isolated from the sea and debarred from her principal commercial outlets. But, nevertheless, the complete organisation of her manhood and State machinery for war has enabled her to protract the land war on even terms. Not only have the Germans held at bay the vast hosts which are gradually being brought to wage war against her, but her officers have rallied and reorganised the loosely-knit legions of her Austrian ally after the severe initial defeats they suffered at the hands of the Russians. A result so unexpected and apparently so unlikely requires special consideration before any attempt to understand a narrative of the events of the war, so far as they are within reach of the historian at the present juncture.

In spite of the important victory of General Russki over the Austrians at Lemberg, and the not less decisive triumphs of the Prussian von Hindenburg on the marches of East Prussia, it cannot be said that so far the war has produced in high places a genius who intuitively understands the new conditions better than his opponents, and can bind victory to the wheels of his chariot. Success in the field has generally been obtained by the intelligence, valour, and staunch endurance of subordinate officers, and by the courage and discipline of the rank and file; though of course generalship has played a very important part. The explanation of the main superiority of one or other of the opposing hosts is principally to be sought in the preparation for war during the years which preceded its outbreak, and the social and political conditions of the nations concerned. The conclusions which are already to be deduced from these facts are of immense importance, and can already be digested.

A brief study, therefore, of the German military constitution, and its effect on the people both of Prussia and of the smaller German States, should precede any examination of the other conditions of the mighty struggle.

Origin of Prussian Military System

The form and shape which the armies of the present day have taken have been gradually evolved from the military systems of Greece and Rome, influenced by the peculiar conditions of the feudal ages. The first military organiser to found a modern system was Gustavus Adolphus, the great Protestant King of Sweden, who fought against the Holy Roman Empire and fell victorious on the field of Lutzen. His system was copied with variations by all the great States of Western Europe, and the Scottish officers who served under him introduced the principles of his organisation into the armies of the Parliament. His two most notable successors in this science were Louvois, War Minister of Louis XIV, and Frederick William, the first King of Prussia. Frederick the Great inherited the best-organised, the best-equipped, and the best-trained army in Europe, and with this formidable weapon he tore Silesia from the Austrian Crown, and, backed up by the British Empire, he successfully defended his conquests against Russia, Austria, and France in coalition. Had it not been for British support, the Prussian Monarchy would never have come into existence, and it was British support which saved it from destruction in the principal crisis of its history.

The victorious epoch of Frederick the Great in Germany was succeeded by a period of military slackness during which the French Revolution broke out. The Revolution produced a mighty change in the organisation of Europe for war. For the first time in history, the principle of universal liability to military service was rigidly enforced in a great nation, and produced the stupendous numbers which delivered France from the first coalition against the Government of the Republic. The devastating wars waged by the Revolutionary Government, and the wasteful expenditure of human life, had gradually reduced the effectives of the Army when Napoleon obtained the consular Crown. Nevertheless he knew how to make the best use of the system bequeathed to him by instituting improvements of his own upon the foundation of the Republican conscription. The army which Napoleon led against the Prussians in 1806 was probably the most formidable in spirit, organisation, and prestige, which he ever commanded, and the obsolete tactics of Frederick's time were swiftly and irretrievably ruined in the skilful operations employed by the French Emperor. Only one battle in history was more fatal to a whole nation than the battle of Jena, fought on October 14th, 1806, and that was likewise a victory gained by the French and Celtic soldiers over the Saxon on the ridge of Hastings, October 14th, 1066. From the military disaster and national humiliation which followed this campaign, Prussia gradually arose, thanks to the leadership furnished by a distinguished group of her officers, of whom the most gifted were Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, Clausewitz, and Jomini. Jomini, a Swiss, was a staff officer of Napoleon. He deserted from the French Army in

1813, and rendered mighty assistance to the cause of the Allies in the campaign of 1813 and 1814.

The Coming of Moltke

During the long peace which succeeded Waterloo, the Prussian Army once again deteriorated under the feeble rule of Frederick William III, for he failed to maintain the military strength required by Prussia's precarious military and geographical position. On two occasions Prussia and Austria fell out, and the feebleness of the Prussian armaments prevented the northern kingdom from carrying out her policy. In 1856, however, an officer was appointed to the General Staff in Berlin, whose genius has raised his country to the summit of influence and power in Europe. The appointment of Moltke to the Prussian War Office marks the commencement of an epoch during which Germany has reconstructed her military constitution, and all the rest of Europe has found itself constrained to follow tardily in her wake. At the end of his career Moltke wrote a remarkable review on the actual position of German military power. In it he says: "The Powers of Europe will seek to imitate all that I have done. They will copy the forms, figures, and the framework of my system; they will create approximately the same organisation and general scheme, but there is one important element in which we shall always be supreme, and that is the hierarchy by which our army is led and trained."

The fate of Germany has imposed the necessity upon her of living by the sword. Ever since the German tribes trekked into the forests of Central Europe they have had to defend their territory against invasion from east, west, and south. The Roman legions failed to subdue their independence, and at various stages of their history their exuberance of vitality has caused the torrent of Teutonic manhood to overflow the natural bounds of Germany, on a career of conquest. The Franks who conquered Gaul and gave their name to France were a Teutonic tribe. The Saxon conquerors of England came from Hanover, Holstein, and Pomerania. Against the tide of Slav expansion the German has always been Europe's principal bulwark. To attain the mastery in the wide domains of the old Holy Roman Empire they were involved in long and bitter wars with the Turk. The whole history of Germany has been a history of offensive and defensive war: not only against external enemies, but in civil strife the Germans have been engaged in sanguinary struggles, of which the most important was the Thirty Years' War.

The Epoch of Gustavus Adolphus

The close of the Wars of the Reformation found Germany laid waste and depopulated, nor did she recover her relative importance to other States until the middle of the last century. When Moltke was appointed principal Military Adviser to the Prussian King, German population and commerce had once again reached a development which placed immense resources at the disposal of the Prussian Government. Germany was, however, still split up in a number of rival States of unequal size and divergent policies, and it took a series of domestic wars before Prussia attained that ascendency which enabled her to sweep the rest of Germany with her into the War of 1870 against the French. This war solidified the German Empire and secured for Prussia the hegemony of Germany, and for Germany the hegemony of Continental Europe.

It is due to these powerful external agencies rather than to any inherent character of the German people that the Germans have succeeded in developing so mighty a nation in arms. Civil and military administration work hand in hand to a degree unknown elsewhere; not that the military element interferes with the civil, or in any way collides with it, but that nothing is allowed to interfere with the military measures really necessitated by the safety of the State. No military officer, for example, is beyond reach of any part of the civil law, but the whole resources of the civil population are at the disposal of the military authorities directly a state of national danger is decreed by the Emperor, just as the crisis of the present war compelled the British Parliament to follow the German example. But the Germans do not wait until after war breaks out to make the preparations they deem advisable.

National Education

Contrary to the usually accepted belief, the discipline of the German Army is less strict than that which prevails in the British Army for example; and the somewhat primitive and brutal methods in favour with some German drill-sergeants do not affect the accuracy of this statement. Severe penalties are nearly always a distinguishing mark of slack discipline. It is rather to the system of national education that Germany owes her fundamental spirit of discipline, an education which embraces the whole population, whereas the system of conscription has, on an average, affected only about half the young men of the nation. The scheme which prevails is inexorable and methodical. It is the test of education which decides whether a boy may present himself for examination to be an officer, to be a civil servant, or a member of a learned profession. There is no avoiding these tests, and they apply practically to all alike of the highest and lowest families in Germany. German children are slower-witted than English children, but they are compelled to work harder in all ranks, and are subjected to very severe discipline. It is to the schools much more than to the regiments that the German nation looks for the training of her citizens. Doubtless the regiments have proved a school of character and of physical culture, but in the last three decades the short terms of military service have done much to spread progressive and Socialist doctrines as well as to inculcate reverence for the existing order of things among the German common people.

The Prussian Officer Corps

Some understanding of the German social system is necessary for the accurate appreciation of the remoter causes which led to the present European War. Until the great expansion of commerce and prosperity which followed the victorious war against France in 1870, there were very few rich people in Germany. Nine-tenths of the titled aristocracy of Prussia were poor, and some were very poor. The conqueror of Austria and France lived at one time on £70 a year, though he sprang from an ancient and noble family. Even to this day poverty is no reproach, and no bar to promotion to the highest civil and military offices of the State, though, naturally, the increased diffusion of wealth has placed many opportunities to social advancement within the reach of those who possess it. It has been often asserted that the system of government which prevails in Germany to-day is not so much German as Prussian, and this is true to a certain extent. It was in Prussia that the German military system first took its characteristic shape, and the position of Prussia on the edge of constantly disputed territory has exerted such a pressure upon its people that they have had no choice but to develop on the same lines or perish. A large proportion of the peasantry of East Prussia are either of Slav origin or largely crossed with Slav blood. The race that has resulted is rougher and harder, but at the same time more docile to authority and more apt for military service than the rest of Germany. It is, too, from the aristocracy of small landowners in Prussia that the Officer Corps first received its peculiar complexion, which has spread to the armies of all the other States in Germany. The Prussians are distinguished for their thoroughness, honesty, and conscientiousness, and it is to these good qualities that they owe their supremacy in economic administration. Formerly, the rank of officer was only conferred upon members of families who had some pretence of aristocratic origin, but since the great expansion of the Army in modern times, the right to serve as an officer has been extended to the middle classes. This extension practically includes every youth who has been well educated and well brought up, though certain regiments are still reserved for the old nobility. Nevertheless, the corps of officers as a body has retained the impress of its original members, and as a result the principal influence in Germany, politically and socially, is the ascendency of the military aristocracy. The influence exerted by the young officers in the Army over the soldiers whom they command, train, and educate, for two of the most impressionable years of their life, is incalculable, and the wonderful discipline and solidity exhibited by the German reserve troops in the present war attest the permanent nature of this influence in training. The young officer leads a hard, self-sacrificing and strenuous existence, and, in the majority of cases, his personality and position enable him to obtain an absolute ascendency over the men in his company; the reverence in which the officers are held never seems to desert a German reservist, even when the latter has become a Social Democrat in politics. Consequently, Germany stands as the champion and stronghold of a system of government which is predominantly aristocratic, whereas her western neighbours have slid further and further along the easy path of Parliamentary government and popular election. Between Germany, on the one side, and on the other France, England, and Belgium, there has been, not only a clash of interests, but also a clash of ideals.

The Prussian General Staff

The principal innovation made by Moltke as Chief of the General Staff dealt with the supreme direction of the Army and the method for making itself felt throughout these subordinate units. In 1860 a large proportion of the superior officers of the Prussian Army were members of the numerous princely houses with which Germany is so richly endowed. The most serious problem which confronted the reformer was to renovate the system of command without colliding with the Princes. Moltke hit upon the following plan for making his influence felt throughout the Army. Each division of four regiments is commanded by a general with an officer of the General Staff, whose duty it became to act as secretary for all executive orders, and to share their responsibility. A general was not bound to consult his staff officer, still less was he bound to give way to his opinion, but every general knew that if he issued orders against which the staff officer protested, the responsibility would be a very heavy one in case of failure. Now these staff officers were selected by a careful system of elimination. Every lieutenant, after completing five years' service as an officer, was entitled to compete for admission to the Kriegs Academie in Berlin. A number, selected to go through the two years' course, were trained for the general duties of the administrative and executive staff; while a still more rigid selection picked out a class every year which was attached to the War Office, brought into personal contact with the Chief of the General Staff, and trained for the most part in the Historical Section of that organisation under his immediate supervision. These officers were then posted to the so-called General or Executive Staff of the Army, as opposed to the Adjutantur or administrative branch. Each division was allowed one, each army corps two or three General Staff officers; and from these officers the generals of the future have been, for the most part, selected.

When Prussia went to war with Austria, in 1866, this system had not had time to show any results. Moltke himself had not yet acquired the prestige necessary to enforce his authority over the veteran chiefs and royal commanders who handicapped the Army. Much friction in the distribution and execution of orders resulted, and the victory of Sadowa, which laid Austria low, redounded all the more to Moltke's credit because it was won in the teeth of these difficulties, which thwarted his plans and repeatedly marred their execution. Four years later, when the armies of Germany were confided to Moltke's direction in the war against France, his authority was almost undisputed and his system made itself felt to great advantage. In the art of organising the command of armies so great that many fractions had to act independently at times without reference to the Commander-in-Chief, Moltke excelled even Napoleon himself, and, though it has been the fashion for a certain school of critics to belittle his career, the results speak for themselves. No general could have achieved a series of such uninterrupted triumphs by mere good fortune. He not only won battles in his own day, but he has bequeathed a system of command to his countrymen which has been copied in detail and form elsewhere, but, as he foresaw, nowhere has the essence of his system been successfully realised. Owing to the historical foundation of the German staff's education, a unity of doctrine prevails through their vast hosts which ensures a certain unity of action even when local leaders are mediocrities. The Historical Section of the German staff was brought into existence by the Prussian military reformers after the disaster of Jena, and it was developed in the peace which followed the fall of Napoleon. The genius of Moltke knew how to obtain the highest practical value from the instrument at his disposal.

Kaiser as War Lord

The command of the Prussian Army was nominally vested in the person of the King and really exercised by Frederick II, who was the greatest general of his age. Under less gifted successors this system had to be adapted so that the best professional soldier in the State actually directed the movements of the Army by the authority of the King. When the King of Prussia became German Emperor the same system was followed in principle. William I invariably acted on the suggestion of his Chief of the Staff, who was the real Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Had the personality of William I been different there might have been great difficulties in carrying out this same scheme. The present Kaiser is known to have had sharp differences of opinion with his principal generals at manœuvres, and he has changed the Chief of the Staff several times on his own initiative. Although we do not know yet to what extent the Kaiser has interfered with the direction of his armies during the present war, it seems probable that the vast scale of the operations has saved them from the leadership of the Sovereign, who, although well versed in the art of war, could not be compared in actual merit with several of his principal generals. While, doubtless, the general scheme of operations was submitted to his perusal and subjected to his criticisms, it seems tolerably certain that the dominant note in all these operations has been given by the prevailing opinion of the General Staff as a body in the actual execution, for manœuvres on the most important scale have really been confided to the army commanders on the spot, though there may be exceptional instances when the Kaiser was present and interfered with the course of events. The very fact of waging war on both frontiers of the Empire on an almost equally important scale provided a rôle to the energetic Sovereign which eliminated his interference from the details of execution. He has been compelled to spend much of his time travelling between his capital and the armies in either theatre, whither he has gone from time to time to encourage the troops by his presence, while retaining a general supervision of the military and political situation at his Imperial headquarters between the two. In such a system as the Prussian, the close connection between the Sovereign and the Army in the field strengthens the hands of its generals, provided there is no undue interference with the plans of the Chief of the General Staff and their general execution by any commanders of armies, for no doubt the arrangement of confiding the most important posts to sundry Crown Princes, who have not necessarily inherited the talents of Frederick, is not without its disadvantages. The wars of the present day have now become a titanic struggle between the manhood *en masse* of the opposing nations. It was Carnot, the famous War Minister of the French Revolution, who first put this plan into practice, but the Prussians adopted it and have perfected its mechanism.

Before the year 1900 it was accepted almost as an axiom that the fate of a European War would be decided by a short, sharp conflict between the troops of the first line of the nations concerned, and it was considered to be very unlikely that the vast mass of human material which had been trained in the Army would ever be called upon to take part in a war. If the war was of a prolonged nature it was considered probable that these masses might gradually be brought into play, though the contingency was regarded as unlikely; but the progress of science changed the conditions of European warfare with dramatic suddenness.

Revolution Effected by Motor Transport

The invention of the internal-combustion engine for the first time rendered possible the assembly and movement of the vast numbers which universal liability to military service had placed at the disposal of the States of Europe, or rather the combination of a perfected railway system with motor transport from the railheads to the troops in the field. The German General Staff was the first to understand the resources thus available, and to profit by them. Until the actual outbreak of war, the French War Office, for example, only planned the addition of a single brigade to the active army corps, while the German Army originally took the field with more than a dozen reserve corps, and the entire duplication of the first line speedily ensued. Thus a very important numerical superiority was achieved from the outset over the principal adversary, and that advance was retained as successive classes of reserves were called up in both countries to form second and third line units.

An army corps marching in a single column along one road, if at full war strength, stretches out for fifteen miles, including its artillery and vehicles necessary for battle, but without its baggage-supply columns and reserve ammunition. Such a column, therefore, requires its horse-drawn transport to cover a good day's march to reach its head from its tail, and columns marching by the same road sometimes consist of more than one army corps. It can, therefore, readily be understood to what extent the existence of motor transport has facilitated, not only the supplying of the troops with food, ammunition, and all the essentials of everyday life in the field, but also the resources of their commander for inspection, distributing orders, and even for transporting fighting units from one part of the country to another. The homely motor-bus has played a very important rôle in the present war.

The laws of Germany place the whole male population at the disposal of the State for purposes of defence. The total peace strength, in 1913, was fixed at about 800,000 men of all ranks, of whom 260,000 were recruits. The various complications of the recruiting laws render it necessary to make a very careful analysis of the available figures to arrive at the exact numbers added to the hosts of the Fatherland each year, but for purposes of a rough computation it may be said that 250,000 soldiers have been annually trained for the last ten years. Military service is imposed from the seventeenth to the forty-fifth year on every man, but in practice begins with the twentieth or twenty-first year. At the outbreak of war there were about 5,000,000 men in Germany who had been trained more or less completely, and about 7,000,000 of military age and vigour who had not been called up, but who were liable to be taken if need be. Various considerations, such as the necessity for carrying on the business of the State, limit these possibilities, but it is within the mark to credit the Empire with a total of ten million men if the last resources were called into play.

Service in the ranks is for two years with the exception of cavalry and artillery. A proportion of young men who have passed an educational test are permitted to enlist for one year, and after special instruction become eligible for the rank of sergeant or officer of reserve units. The Officer Corps of the first line is entered by special tests and a course of training both at a military school and as cadets with a regiment. The name of each candidate is submitted to the officers of the regiment, who decide by vote whether to accept him or not. In practice a candidate is almost invariably informed during his period of probation whether or no he will be accepted, and the voting is somewhat of a formality.

Germans of all grades of society and all grades of education are, therefore, carefully classified so that the powers and aptitude of each man can be used by the Army to the best advantage. The methodical nature of this organisation has rendered it possible to produce divisions of second and third line troops with proper framework of officers and non-commissioned officers with unexpected rapidity and efficiency, besides maintaining the original army corps of the first line in the field at their fighting strength and also maintaining the necessary guards and garrisons in the interior of the country, and the indispensable personnel of the training depots and lines of communication. It is probable that Germany has had an average of 4,500,000 of men under arms since the full development of her third line or triplication of her first line, besides invalids, and there is no reason to doubt that this strength can be maintained for a war lasting three years, so far as man power alone is concerned.

There are two other vital considerations in estimating the available reserve forces of any modern State. The first is the reserve stores of arms and equipment of all sorts, the second is the degree of training, discipline, and general solidarity for military purposes retained by reservists after leaving the colours. In each of these branches of her organisation Germany has excelled her rivals as completely as in the formation and government of her first-line army corps. Certainly she has devoted vast sums for the equipment of her troops, but a comparison of her military expenditure with that of England or France reveals how very much more she has been able to get for her money than either of the two Governments quoted. Moreover, the vast numbers of men liable to service, of whom less than half have actually been embodied, has made it possible for the Berlin War Office to study the convenience of the civil population, so that the training of reservists has occasioned as little economic disturbance as possible. On the whole the periods of training are not unpopular, especially with the peasants, though the original training of the recruit is apt to be strenuous, and, varying with the personnel employed, is known in a number of cases to have been enforced by unjustifiable harshness. Naturally the most has been made of any cases of brutal treatment of the rank and file by the critics of the Imperial régime; moreover it is certain that the spirit of the German Army could not be what it is unless the soldiers in the ranks were as a body devoted to their regiments and their officers.

EQUIPMENT AND ARMS

The German infantry is armed with the Mauser rifle of the model dated 1898, but in spite of vast sales of obsolete rifles to the Turks, the German authorities have systematically increased their reserve stores of rifles, guns, and ammunition on a lavish scale, and with the well-defined intention of being able to arm and mobilise all their trained soldiers in time of war. The manufacture of arms and munitions of war has been both protected and assisted to a very important extent by the State, so that the profit on the export of artillery, firearms, and warlike stores from Krupp's famous works at Essen and from other German centres of industry has gone a long way to pay for the armament of the Imperial forces now in the field. It cannot be denied that by her efficiency and energy Germany has forced the pace in the rivalry between national armaments and by so doing has helped to create the state of Continental politics which has brought about the great war. To have armed herself completely and effectively without alarming her neighbours would in the long run, however, have proved more dangerous for them still.

The business-like methods of the German war administration had also succeeded in putting the horse-breeding industry on a satisfactory footing, so that the German cavalry was suitably mounted with horses enough without requisitioning any private property for the first line, as we were compelled to in England to mount the handful of horsemen which we dispatched to France at the outbreak of the war. The price paid for remounts by the German Government is not niggardly, and for many years it had been in the habit of making large purchases in England and Ireland, particularly of hunter mares and thoroughbred stock for breeding purposes in the Prussian Royal Studs. The large number of horses owned all over Germany, but particularly in the north, by the landowners made it easy for the War Office to find horses for second-line cavalry and for artillery.

Artillery Surprise

It was, however, with the artillery arm that the Germans had prepared the most effective surprise in their peace preparation. Some authorities had loudly vaunted that the French field gun of 75 cm. was superior to any other, and for certain purposes it has proved itself to be so. A very ingenious contrivance has enabled this gun to be used as a howitzer as well—that is, to throw shells at a high angle—while the Germans used a separate gun for howitzer work, and had amply provided each army corps with howitzers. Since these howitzers threw a much heavier shell than the French field gun, the German combination proved a more powerful armament, and told heavily in the first great battles. But this was not all. The German authorities had dowered their armies with a siege-train of powerful howitzers, hurling shells of 21 cm. *i.e.* 8-inch calibre, and even of 42 cm. These monstrous machines had to be brought to the scene of action with special precautions, and needed concrete floors for their use. Motor traction with roller wheels enabled their owners to move them from the railhead to the spot required, and tanks of plaster of paris were conveyed to make the gun platforms. It is asserted that in some instances gun platforms of cement, at likely tactical positions, as along the Aisne, had been secretly prepared by the enemy in peace in French territory.

The devastating effect of the huge projectiles thrown by the German siege artillery smashed up the defences of the Liége forts and speedily reduced Namur and Antwerp. They are however principally effective, like other artillery, against a well-defined target such as a fort, and fail to produce much effect on low-lying trenches or barbed-wire entanglements. Against the perimeter of Verdun, for example, the enemy have had no success because they have been held at a distance by a network of trenches and outworks, and have not been permitted to concentrate and cross their fire on any one vulnerable and easily-marked target. Fortunately the effect of such infernal machinations as 16-inch shells is very local, but a ton of metal hurled some thousand feet up in the sky, and descending with terrific momentum upon masonry ten miles away, crashes through all existing patterns of defensive armour, and pulverises every type of defensive construction like the explosion of a small volcano. The German howitzer shells " bit great pieces out of the landscape," as a British general said in a letter at the beginning of the war.

The idea of powerful howitzers had not been a German monopoly, and the writer, after sundry Continental manœuvres in 1912 and 1913, had drawn attention to the German preparations in this respect ; but the British and French War Offices were more intent on economy than on keeping pace with the latest pattern of hostile weapons, so that the Germans were suffered to establish their lead unchallenged. Both the material superiority and the skilful tactical employment of their field artillery at the opening of the campaign in Belgium were of priceless service to the German commanders, and contributed to an important degree to their initial victories. The factories of Great Britain and France have since redressed the balance, but advantages obtained in the early stages of a war exert their effects for long and are not easily counterbalanced.

AIRCRAFT

Even more important than improvements in artillery, though acting in combination with it, has proved the invention of flying machines. Formerly there was no appreciable advantage to be got by hurling projectiles beyond a certain distance, a distance easily surveyed with a field-glass, because it was impossible to gauge the effect of such fire, and ammunition was wasted before any estimate could be made of the result. The invention of aeroplanes, and their tactical application for reconnoitring the hostile positions and dispositions up to a radius of ten miles, enormously increased the power of artillery by working in combination with the batteries by means of concealed observers who pass on results by telephone to their gunners. The Germans, whenever they possibly can, thoughtfully supplement these methods by spies and by men hidden in houses, bushes, and haystacks in the hostile lines who are connected with a telephone line to their own side.

Owing to the French feats of aviation since its invention, it was generally expected that from the outset they would establish a superiority in the air, but because the science had not been sufficiently used to practise in combination with troops and tactical exercises, at first at any rate, the superiority for practical purposes lay with the enemy. In this respect, however, the British shone unexpectedly, because the whole aerial resources of the country were instantly thrown into the scale with a host of skilful pilots, and the area in front of the British Army has been small by comparison with the front to be patrolled by French and German aviators.

ZEPPELINS

At an early stage of air-craft development both France and England practically abandoned the race for supremacy in airships, as distinct from heavier than air machines, to Germany. These great balloons, propelled by motors, proved so vulnerable even to the ordinary accidents of weather, and so many disasters overtook the early ventures, that the Allied States resolved to rely upon aeroplanes almost entirely for warfare in the air. Germany, however, persevered with the invention of Count Zeppelin, spent vast sums on the construction of a fleet of airships, and certainly succeeded in achieving a great measure of reliability in their coming and going. National pride was, no doubt, involved, and the hope of successfully intimidating the foe by a weapon whose powers were unknown. The carrying-power of the Zeppelin apparently made it a formidable menace to ships and towns even if its huge bulk made it a vulnerable target.

Fortunately for the Allies, their judgment in this respec has proved to be correct. The Zeppelins have failed to render any great service to the German Army, even when the darkness of the long winter's nights gave them the most favourable circumstances for their flights. Whenever they were visible they were easily held in check by artillery and outflown by aeroplanes. So far they have failed alike to destroy, to intimidate, or to reconnoitre, and must be reckoned a costly blunder, like the German battle squadrons, if judged by the development they had attained on the outbreak of war, although subsequent events may modify this conclusion.

The methodical renewal and upkeep of arms, munitions, and equipment have enormously facilitated the task of the German War Office in making use of their rich resources in man-power for duplicating and triplicating their field armies. Suddenly to make up arrears in this field of preparation is enormously costly and also very difficult. Unless there is a fairly constant annual demand, private manufacturers cannot possibly maintain the plant for making war material, and it may take longer to make the plant than the weapons. But to add or renew a fixed proportion of war stores every year costs comparatively little to a great State, and constitutes a sound insurance. From the events of this war it may almost be laid down that a European conflict divides itself into the following stages. The first, when the first-line corps are made up to war strength and take the field; the second, when the standing army is duplicated; the third, when it is triplicated; and the fourth, when the struggle is prolonged by drawing upon the hitherto untrained reserves of the nation to maintain these huge hosts in the field at war strength. The Germans almost succeeded in merging the second with the first stage, so rapidly did the second line follow the first to the seat of war, and thus they gained a very important advantage from the outset over the western Allies.

Closely linked with the methodical upkeep of war material, the gradual and unobtrusive training of reservists has yielded also very important results. The vast numbers required to fill the ranks of the reserve corps were not out of touch with discipline and training, but speedily took their places, and assisted by the judicious system whereby the Germans draft officers and soldiers from the first-line regiments to new formations, these young regiments, pushed straight on to the battlefield without previous corporate existence, have proved little less valuable than the standing Army. Once again this result, which counted for so much in the most critical stage of the war, is to be ascribed much more to the sounder system of government enjoyed by the German Army than to the superior valour or virtue of the German soldier.

Reservists in State Employ

In spite of the prevalence of a certain type of social democracy among the German electorate, there is no doubt that the ordinary German subject retains much more of military discipline and instincts after he leaves the colours than, for example, the French reservist. The very fact that he has to serve for subsequent short periods as such, as well as the strictly-regulated atmosphere of German city life, contribute, but no doubt the two predominant causes of this military tendency are the children's education, and the yearning which has become instinctive in the manhood of the nation, to wear a uniform as often and as long as possible.

The Imperial régime has not, however, confided entirely in sentimental loyalty, but has fostered this predilection by material interest. A cunningly-devised scheme of employing old soldiers throughout the Empire, but especially in Prussia, has been organised and developed with minute respect for justice of the rights of applicants, and rigid economy of the means at disposal. The vast Crown lands, forests, and mines, the State-owned railways, the post-office, police, and other Government services all dovetail into a grand system of pensioning old soldiers and rewarding loyal service in the Army.

Even the rise of industrialism, which has been so fatal to military ideals elsewhere, has in Germany assisted to maintain them by looking after the material and economic requirements of the poor. In Germany, hunger, squalid slums and sweated classes of workmen did not exist in the years preceding the war. The vast expansion of industry, and especially the industry of making weapons of war, had gone hand in hand with well-thought-out provisions for the reasonable rights and needs of the poorer working-classes. With a rapidly increasing population, there was almost no unemployment, and the mass of the people felt quite convinced that the Imperial Government had the power and the will to protect their interests and to do them justice. The Socialist vote represented criticism, but not sedition as a general rule.

While all these factors have to be remembered in appraising the German military system, and the prolonged resistance it is capable of offering to the rest of Europe, the social condition of the nation must also be taken into account. In Germany, instead of the plutocracy which in other States holds the highest place in social, official, and political circles, an aristocracy holds unquestioned social supremacy. This aristocracy is chiefly military, but is also recruited from other branches of the public service, and by the leading lights of the learned professions. Scientific men, doctors, and professors, especially of history, are of far greater account than elsewhere, and this aristocracy in many ways exerts a powerful influence both upon the Government and the nation. To begin with, the whole instruction of the people, at school, at college, and in the ranks of the Army, is confided to it. The unimportance of the public positions which are obtainable by money as compared with the power wielded by this aristocracy is the key to the situation in German social life.

THE GERMAN OFFICER CORPS

The rather rigid classification of German society certainly promotes envy and jealousy among those who have not succeeded by rising in the public service; it is, however, a powerful incentive to serve the Crown, for the Army alone in peace requires 35,000 officers, and the grade of reserve officer also is keenly coveted. It is therefore possible for almost any young man of good physique, good education, and middle-class respectable parentage, to attain the rank of lieutenant with all that it means in Germany. A lieutenant is invested with what is hazily described by our military law as " powers of commanding officer." His responsibility for the training of his men is direct, and he stands or falls by his success in his task. There is no system of secret reporting upon officers from unprofessional motives. Therefore the evils which have wrought such havoc in the worth and solidarity of the officer corps of other armies have never tainted the German service. This fact has had all-important results in the war, and will tell more and more as it proceeds.

The Sovereign himself is personally the chief of the promotion department of the German Army. Doubtless he has from time to time allowed personal predilection to exert influence in the choice of the higher commanders, but his personal supervision over the system of promotion of the mass of regimental officers has preserved its reputation for impartiality and correct choice. A wide inquiry among the officers of junior rank before the war proved that absolute confidence existed in the machinery which governed the promotion of the Army, and next to the system for selecting higher leaders through the General Staff, no other feature of the German Army has conduced so effectively to render it formidable in war. Neighbouring States would have done better to have copied it in these respects than to have adopted the unsightly spikes on the bell-shaped helmet, which cannot even be worn in the field.

The supreme command of all the forces of the German Empire is vested in the Kaiser when war is declared, though the Bavarian, Saxon, and Würtemberg armies retain a considerable measure of independence in peace. Under William I this command was exercised in practice by General Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of the General Staff, who personally directed the operations in the wars against Austria (1866) and France (1870). The German armies were then more manageable, because the masses were assembled in a single theatre of war, where they could be controlled by one man, though during the latter part of the campaign in France Moltke was constrained to issue "directions" instead of "orders" to the army commanders operating at a distance from the German headquarters at Versailles, owing to the impossibility of the latter following the operations quickly enough to issue orders. The outbreak of the present war also found a General von Moltke, the nephew of the victor of Sadowa and Sedan, Chief of the German General Staff. He had never previously had an opportunity of commanding in war, and his leadership of troops at manœuvres had given the impression that he was cautious, somewhat slow in execution, and better at careful preparation of well-considered plans than at meeting sudden emergencies and rapid changes of situation. This forecast proved to be quite correct.

The command of the German armies arrayed against Russia was confided to General von Hindenburg, a veteran who had made a life's study of the eastern marches of Prussia, and who had shown skill at grand manœuvres, for the German manœuvres have been made use of to discover talent in leadership and to eliminate the incompetent from the higher ranks. The Kaiser reserved to himself the supreme command of both armies in the field from Imperial headquarters, which were with the western armies at the beginning of the campaign. In reality the central direction rested with General von Falkenhayn, the Minister for War, who remained at Berlin. General von Falkenhayn succeeded von Moltke as Chief of the General Staff after the retreat from the Marne, and it should be explained that the rôle of the Chief of the Staff is to plan and execute military operations in war, to supervise the strategy of the War Office in peace, and the instruction and inspection of the General Staff. The War Minister controls the administrative and routine business of the War Office. Neither post quite corresponds to any in our Army, but it may be said that the Chief of the Staff has approximately the duties formerly performed by our Commander-in-Chief without the administrative work which cumbered that office, while the Prussian War Minister deals with the duties which fall to our Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General, and to some extent all the duties performed by the military members of the Army Council other than the Chief of the Staff. The authority and responsibility of these officers are well defined and real. The Kaiser alone is their military and political superior, but since the German Government in war-time works in close collaboration with its military chiefs, the Chancellor of the Empire must be regarded as a colleague of the other two officers, and in Bismarck's day he constantly made himself felt in spite of the prestige and forcible personality of Moltke.

Von Falkenhayn

The career of von Falkenhayn is a striking instance of the way in which military talent is sought for and recognised in the German Army. This officer had quitted the service before 1900 in consequence of debts, as it was commonly reported. He had betaken himself to China in search of adventure, and on the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion he applied for a post in the Expeditionary Force. He rendered himself so useful, owing to his knowledge of the country, that he was appointed, first, the German governor of Tientsin city after it was stormed by the Allied troops, and subsequently President of the Tientsin Provisional Government, which administered and pacified a large section of Chihle in the occupation of the Europeans. Falkenhayn gave proof of the highest administrative ability, and the British officers in particular who served with and under him unanimously bore witness to his capacity and urbanity.

The Boxer Campaign brought Falkenhayn to the personal notice of the Kaiser, who reappointed him to the General Staff, and promoted him from one important post to another. He now holds the greatest military command in point of size ever imposed upon a single man in the world's history, and the most critical since the era of Napoleon.

The German armies which invaded Belgium and France in August 1914 were numbered from one to seven, and commanded by the following generals: von Kluck, von Bülow, von Hausen, Duke Albert of Würtemberg, Crown Prince of

Prussia, Crown Prince of Bavaria, and von Heeringen. Of these generals the Crown Prince of Prussia alone was known by reputation to the British people. He had been our guest in India and in England, had signalised himself by some scrapes of questionable taste and unquestionable folly, had written a moderate book on his travels and played the somewhat worn-out card of out-heroding Herod by courting popularity in Germany when his Imperial father seemed to err on the side of peace and moderation. He had never displayed any remarkable military talent, but was provided with some of the best staff officers in the German Army to assist his dispositions.

Composition of the German Army

In peace the German Army consists of twenty-five army corps, each of two divisions of infantry. An infantry division is composed of four regiments each of three battalions, and for tactical purposes two regiments form a brigade. The division is approximately of the same strength in all the armies now at war. An army corps district forms a complete administrative province. The soldiers trained in it are passed from one category of reserve to another, and have been successively summoned to the colours to form new reserve units as already described. Besides its two infantry divisions each army corps is complete in cavalry, artillery, and auxiliary services; these services also are organised so as to be duplicated and triplicated in war as rapidly as possible, besides providing the personnel to train fresh classes of recruits and the garrisons of fortresses and line-of-communication troops.

The following is a table of the German army corps; it should be noted that with the exception of the Guard Corps, and to a limited extent the XV and XVI Corps, the recruiting is local. The reservists therefore live round the regiments to which they belong, an arrangement which facilitates rapid mobilisation. Nevertheless the mobilisation of a national Army imposes a stupendous burden on the railway system, for of necessity there must be much coming and going in those momentous days. The part played by railways in this war has been all-important, so that further discussion of their work will fit in with the more critical operations which hinged upon their employment.

Guard Corps .	Berlin	Prussian
I . . .	East Prussia	,,
II . . .	Pomerania	,,
III . . .	Brandenburg	,,
IV . . .	Prussian Saxony	,,
V . . .	Posen	,, (Polish Partly)
VI . . .	Silesia	,,
VII . . .	Westphalia	,,
VIII . .	Rhineland	,,
IX . .	Holstein, Mecklenburg, etc.	,, (Danish Partly)
X . . .	Hanover	,,
XI . . .	Hesse-Cassel	,,
XII . .	East Saxony	Saxon
XIII . .	Würtemberg	Würtemberg
XIV . .	Baden	Baden
XV . . .	Alsace	Prussian
XVI . .	Lorraine	,,
XVII . .	West Prussia	,,
XVIII . .	Hesse, Darmstadt, and Frankfort	,,
XIX . .	West Saxony	Saxon
XX . . .	East Prussia	Prussian
XXI . .	Alsace and Lorraine	,,
I, II and III .	Bavarian	

THE AUSTRIAN ARMY

Although the other armies of Europe have, with the single exception of the British, copied in outward form and general lines of organisation the Prussian model, each has been compelled to adapt itself somewhat to local conditions, which have modified its development, and fortunately for the Allies of to-day the local conditions of Austria have greatly interfered with the creation of a powerful national Army on the same lines as Germany. The Austrian Army consisted of but sixteen army corps in peace, of which two were detailed to hold Bosnia, the recently annexed territory south of the Danube. The strategic necessity of guarding the frontiers and the comparatively poor railway system of the Dual Monarchy had also imposed the condition of quartering the bulk of the Army in the frontier provinces, so that the peace disposition of the remaining fourteen corps was a fan-like disposition along the Russian and Italian frontiers, with a reserve in the interior. For other reasons, too, local recruitment was not possible, except to a very limited extent.

The political conditions of the Austrian Empire had become so complicated and unfavourable to the existence of a national Army that even the best organisation, administered by the most capable and honest officials, could not bring it up to the German standard of efficiency. From the efforts made by Austria in the war, it is clear that she was by no means behindhand in preparations, but the internal dissensions of her people have heavily handicapped her military power. Besides the initial drawback of the double State, with its difficulties in submitting Hungarian troops to German staff officers and language, there was the even greater disrupting influence of the Slav population which encircled the core of the Empire—the Czech population of Bohemia, the Polish and Russian people in Galicia, the Roumanians in Transylvania, and, even more, the pronouncedly hostile Slavs of the southern provinces had to be included in the Army in such a manner that the loyal soldiers should outnumber and carry along the unwilling. But no possible scheme of recruitment or of distributing the conscripts could have solved the problem satisfactorily.

Austria has a population of 50 millions, of whom 8 millions might be called to the colours; perhaps 3½ millions had received military training. She was able to mobilise the equivalent of 24 army corps on the outbreak of war, but one fourth of these were held in the south to watch Italy and defend Bosnia against the Serbians. Of the remainder, two principal groups were formed—one in Galicia, with headquarters at Lemberg, to hold in check the Russian armies whose centre was Kief; and the other on the Polish frontier, for an offensive march against Warsaw and the Russian armies of the north. Neither army was sufficiently strong for its purpose, and both failed, as we shall relate in a subsequent chapter. The mixture of nationalities which were included in the Galician army, and the sympathy for the enemy of the majority of the Galicians, largely accounted for the results of the opening of the campaign; but the restoration of the Austrian forces, their rally on the Carpathians and prolonged stand, show that at any rate the German and Hungarian subjects of Francis Joseph are devoutedly loyal and capable of immense military efforts. Probably Austria has had on an average 2 million soldiers under arms during the first nine months of the war.

CHAPTER II

THE ALLIED ARMIES

The history of the French regular Army is not even second in interest to that of the German. France more than any other part of Europe absorbed and retained the characteristics of Roman rule, and Rheims was a Roman capital long after the Roman Empire had begun to decline in influence and power. Medieval France was deeply tinged with the spirit of its Celtic inhabitants, but the Latin element always held a certain sway, and its influence is to be seen even to this day. French armies have always been famous for their impetuosity in attack, for their powers of marching, and for their enthusiastic appreciation of a great chief. There have been times, though, when their discipline suffered, and generally it may be said that the French lack somewhat of the patience, perseverance, and tenacity of the British, Prussians, and Russians.

Louvois, the great Minister of Louis XIV, was the first French War Minister to organise the King's Army on an important scale, so that in the wars at the close of the seventeenth century the French forces excelled in organisation, equipment, and tactical skill. Under Turenne they gained important victories and overran rich provinces on the eastern frontier of France, but after the death of Turenne the French Army produced no leader capable of withstanding Marlborough, who inflicted a series of disasters on the French at the close of Louis XIV's reign.

At the outbreak of the French Revolution the royal Army lagged somewhat behind the other armies of Europe, but nevertheless was formidable by reason of its numbers, traditions, and personnel. It is impossible to characterise the supine neglect of the Army by Louis XVI and his principal supporters otherwise than as imbecile. Had the Army received proper attention, and had the monarch maintained personal touch with his officers and soldiers, had he removed the more glaring abuses which tended to arouse discontent in barracks and pave the way for revolutionary agents, the rebellion which destroyed French society would never have succeeded. Napoleon's first kingly act was to put an end to sedition in the capital by prompt use of the troops at his disposal.

The Revolution entirely altered the character of the Army. It first attempted to wage war by levies of volunteers, but they lacked discipline and failed to enrol in sufficient numbers. Then Carnot became Minister of War. He adopted conscription with almost universal liability to serve, and produced for the first time in modern history a nation under arms. With a million and a half of soldiers thus put at his disposal he successfully defied the rest of Europe, but the sanguinary wars of the revolutionary period, together with the bloodshed in the interior, sapped the vitality of the Army and reduced its numbers. When Napoleon ascended the Consular throne in 1800, the French Army was exhausted, and he gave it five years' rest before resuming warlike operations against the States of the European coalition, who still regarded France with sullen hostility. There followed a decade of warfare in which the French armies under Napoleon covered themselves with imperishable glory. Much of their success is no doubt to be attributed to the genius of their chief, nevertheless it must be admitted that no Army at any period of the world's history could claim such a series of brilliant performances, both in the victorious and the disastrous campaigns between 1805 and 1815.

There is some reason to fear that the destruction of human life in the French Revolution, and, even more, the destruction of spiritual life in France, due to the uprooting of ancient traditions and long-established faith, have permanently reduced the vitality of the French nation. Before the Revolution France was the most densely populated part of Europe, with a rapidly increasing population; the nation was exuberant, aggressive, and enterprising, and at several stages of its history a danger to its neighbours. The French people to-day are conservative, wealthy, and cautious: all they demand is to be left in peace to enjoy what they have got. Their population is not increasing, and in the few years which preceded the war the true French population somewhat diminished; worse than all, military spirit and patriotism generally had become a mockery to a powerful political faction which had thus undermined to some extent the military power of the nation. In 1914 France was unable to defend herself without allies against the German Empire: a century ago, without a single ally, she overran the continent of Europe and all but succeeded in re-establishing the Roman Empire, with Paris as its capital.

The causes which immediately led to the feud between the French and German races are older even than the French Revolution, but it was that cataclysm which gave permanence to the rivalry between France and Prussia. The policy of the Second Empire aimed at preventing any one Power from becoming more powerful than France on the continent of Europe. Napoleon III's government inflicted sharp defeats on Russia and Austria in succession, and the defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866 left France and North Germany face to face as competitors for the principal rôle in European diplomacy. The actual pretext for war was almost trivial, but the rivalry which prompted hostility was acute, and while the Germans bitterly resented the hostility of former French Governments and Napoleon's opposition to the consolidation of German power, the conservative masses of the French people, on the other hand, were awakening to the reality of Germany's superior strength, and beginning to fear that it might be employed against them at any moment. German diplomacy was as successful in 1870 as it was clumsy in 1914, so that the declaration of war seemed to come from France on a flimsy pretext. The German armies were ready before the French: they speedily surrounded and destroyed the Imperial Forces, captured Paris, and dictated a humiliating and costly peace.

But the French Army which was opposed to Germany in

1870 was by no means so inferior even to the German as has generally been assumed by historians and others, though it was organised on a more old-fashioned model. The principal causes of its defeat were the incompetence of its commanding generals, and the genius of Moltke, the German generalissimo.

After the war the French proceeded to copy the German system in its most important features. While this reorganisation was in progress they constructed a system of fortifications on the eastern frontier which effectually barred all the roads from Germany into France; Vauban's old fortress of Verdun became one of the largest and strongest entrenched camps in Europe, and from Luxembourg to the Swiss frontier a chain of barrier forts formed a curtain behind which the French Army might assemble in security in case of another attack from Germany. France was divided into military provinces like Germany, each of which contained an army corps similarly organised to the German, while Paris and Lyons were converted into two great central entrenched camps which might act as bases for armies defending French territory. Defence, not aggression, was the obvious motive of the French preparations. Military service was fixed first at five, and very soon afterwards at three years in the ranks, and the Army was thoroughly re-equipped, patiently exercised, and prepared for the possibility of meeting once more its giant antagonist.

FRANCE'S FORTRESS BARRIER

The construction of the curtain of fortresses on France's eastern frontier, which was seriously undertaken in 1875, when relations with Germany once again became strained, has undoubtedly exercised a very important effect on European politics. It enabled the French to reorganise her Army in comparative security, and helped to maintain the European equilibrium for a generation, which is about as much as could be expected of any one great military measure. It would therefore be unfair to criticise this measure by the light of the experience of the present war. Nevertheless, purely as a military conclusion we see that the policy of fortification was carried either too far or not far enough. With the money expended it would have been better strategy to have prepared and armed two great entrenched camps, say Verdun and Epinal, with a third at Maubeuge or even Soissons, than to have inaugurated a Chinese wall of small forts which covered the Franco-German frontier, but which was liable to be turned through Belgium and Switzerland. In fact the German system of defence with entrenched camps at Strasburg and Metz in first line, and with the fortified bridgeheads of the Rhine in second line, is better calculated to achieve the end in view.

As a general conclusion it must be recorded that no country in history ever made a more splendid rally than did France after the crushing disasters of 1870. Why then has that great material effort been a comparative failure? Partly because the movement of regeneration had spent itself in twenty-five years, partly because of vices inherent in the internal polity of the French people. For by comparison with Germany France has failed to keep the standard she set herself to attain and actually did attain in the second decade after Sedan.

The French throughout their history have been subject to violent fluctuations of national sentiment. Alternately they rise to the highest pitch of heroism and abnegation, or dissipate their strength by internal dissension, by vain and frivolous pursuits, and by yielding too much to the enervating influence of living in their glorious country, which yields too easily an abundant prosperity. About 1893 the reorganised Army of the Republic had reached its zenith. The French were then better equipped and tactically better trained than any other European troops; the cavalry was considerably superior to its principal rival, and the infantry marched better. In the realm of organisation the French military laws had succeeded in producing numbers but little inferior to the German, and the corps of officers, though less aristocratic than over the Rhine, yet had a professional prestige of their own founded upon the glories of the revolutionary wars and the high position of the Army during the reign of Napoleon III.

Progress of French Army

Unfortunately the close understanding with Russia and its consequences were not fully appreciated by the majority of French politicians, although the military leaders, it is true, realised the increasing gravity of the situation and strained every nerve to increase their armaments and perfect their troops. The French and Russian General Staffs were in close communication, and France and Russia from time to time exhorted one another to remedy the weak points in their respective forces ; the anti-militarist party in France, however, professed to disbelieve in the imminence of danger, and valued the Russian alliance chiefly because they trusted that it would save France from depending on her own strength. In the meanwhile both France and Russia continued to clash with the German Empire in the field of international politics ; quarrels over Morocco were twice renewed, and were within an ace of leading to war in 1911, while between Germany and Russia the question of the tariff, and other economic problems, engendered hostility ; but it was, as usual, an outside and unexpected cause which ultimately led to a breach of the peace. Russia and Austria were committed to irreconcilable policies in the Balkan peninsula. The war of 1913 was brought to a conclusion by European diplomacy without the armed intervention of the Great Powers, but Russian championship of Serbia, and the Austrian difficulty with the southern Slavs, was the final cause which revived the ancient quarrel between France and Germany, and plunged all Europe into war.

Morocco

The Morocco crisis of 1911, followed by the critical state of Europe during the first Balkan war, had indeed aroused the French Parliament to the necessity of increasing their forces. Germany, too, had initiated reforms enabling the Kaiser to train a very much larger proportion of the annual contingent of young men available for service ; the German peace establishment was raised by this measure from about

670,000 to about 850,000 men, and two fresh army corps were called into existence on her frontiers, so it became evident that the troops maintained in France on a peace footing were altogether insufficient to withstand a sudden attack from the German army corps upon the frontier. Accordingly the system of two years' service, which had been introduced ten years before, was repealed, and the old law of three years' service was revived in a last attempt to compete with Germany in the matter of numbers, while at the same time stringent regulations were embodied in the law to ensure that every man was trained without exception. After long and bitter discussion, and after accepting several amendments which whittled down the original proposals of their military authorities, the French Chamber of Deputies eventually agreed to the law of three years' service in the summer of 1913, so that in the following autumn there were three annual classes of recruits embodied in the regiments, of whom two classes were untrained recruits; thus throughout the autumn and winter of 1913–14 the French Army found itself in a very critical situation, two-thirds of its *personnel* being recruits. It says something for German reluctance to begin war that she did not choose this most critical period to force on a quarrel without waiting for the grievances of the Serbians to start the trouble, although her own Army was somewhat dislocated at the time by the creation of new regiments and other embarrassing changes of machinery designed to meet the increased annual contingent.

In all democratic States there seems to be instinctive dread and distrust of talented men, and preference for mediocrities, especially in the high posts of the Army. The French Government, having been on more than one occasion subverted by the Army, has perhaps more excuse than other democracies for this particular form of caution, but the greatest blunder committed by the French reformers after the Peace of Frankfort in 1871 was to reinstate most of their defeated generals, who had proved their insufficiency of military talent, instead of seeking for the best men among the less highly placed officers of the Army, as Carnot did in the days of the Revolution. Throughout the war of 1870 only one general of those in high command had shown himself in any way superior to his German opponents, and that was General Chanzy. Marshal McMahon, President of the new Republic, was a gallant commander of an army corps, and a most loyal and devoted servant of the State, but his general intelligence and military ability were far below the standard required at this crisis of French history, as was proved by the colossal mistakes he made in command of the army at Chalons during the ten days which preceded the final catastrophe of Sedan. Not only caution, but conceit, largely accounts for the preference which democratic politicians show for inferior generals: they like to be able to meddle and dictate in a way which stronger men would not tolerate. After 1871 the promotion of officers in the French Army was organised on a basis which appeared to offer good prospects of fair dealing, and which certainly safeguarded the professional rights of the officer; it was quite impossible for a politician spending a few days every year in camp to become a colonel over the head of his military betters; every officer was guaranteed promotion by seniority after a certain number of years in each grade, and a certain proportion in each grade were selected each year for promotion "by choice," so that talented young officers might reach the high ranks before they had lost the zest and strength of their best years. In spite of these precautions the system has been a failure in comparison with that which has prevailed in Germany. Promotion "by choice" has not been used enough to render the General's List sufficiently young and active. Another abuse has been the influence of party politics, which has been brought to bear on the selection of each general. As a result most of the generals of the French Army were unfitted for their most responsible duties, and when war broke out a large proportion had to be relieved of their commands after the first great collision; it is to this cause that General Joffre attributes the initial ill-success of the French armies. In any system of promotion like attracts like, and it is inevitable that a general officer with a certain order of ideas prefers such of his subordinates as he deems to be of his way of thinking, and generally of his military type. No army can contend with its own generals, and when once the generals of an army become inferior as a body to those of its opponents, the handicap which that army has to carry in the event of war is very serious indeed.

FRENCH MILITARY LEADERS

In addition to the professional reasons which militated against the selection of the best officers in the French Army for rapid promotion, there was also the political complication which began seriously to affect the corps of officers when the *affaire Dreyfus* became acute in 1898. It was alleged and believed that officers who were Freemasons or Liberals were far more likely to be promoted and otherwise favoured than their comrades, and also that officers who belonged to noble families, or to the military aristocracy which had arisen during the Revolution, or who were known to be Catholics and Conservatives, were regarded askance by Liberal War Ministers. This calamitous state of things reached a climax when General André was Minister for War, and the system of confidential reports methodically classified the officers of the Army according to their political opinions, thus opening wide the gates to personal malevolence and other irrelevant issues, as all unchecked systems of secret reporting must inevitably do. After the retirement from office of General André these abuses were to some extent remedied, but the mischief they had caused was profound, and the French Army was still suffering deeply from it when it was overtaken by war.

In spite of the political tendencies which had to some degree impeded the military efforts of the nation in the two decades before August 1914, yet the French Army possessed a corps of officers second only to the German in military spirit and *esprit de corps*, and perhaps superior to the German in tactical skill. Unfortunately the weakest part of the comparison lay in the highest ranks. Just as in 1870 the French Army excelled all the Continental Armies but the one which it had the misfortune to encounter, so in 1914 it had to bear the whole brunt of the first onslaught of the German masses. Nothing but consummate skill in the higher leadership could have given victory to France in the first encounter, and as the German reserve divisions rapidly reinforced their first line, while the French mobilisation of second-line troops hung fire for want of preparation in peace, the balance of advantage inclined more and more to the invader, just as in 1870.

The French Organisation

A brief description of the French organisation, with some information concerning the different arms of the service, will facilitate the study of the field operations. The army corps regions are numbered from 1 to 21, of which the 19th is quartered in Algiers; a 22nd army corps is formed by the three divisions of Colonial troops, viz. troops liable for Colonial service but which are quartered in France. Consequently, if the French system had been in as good working order as the German, having regard to the German army corps which could not be withdrawn from the Russian frontier, France should have been able to assemble approximately the same forces at the opening of the campaign as her enemy, and owing to the distances to be covered by train in effecting this assembly, the French corps should have been in line before their foes. Each army corps was to be duplicated by second-line troops, of which one brigade would march with its army corps, and the other three brigades would form an independent reserve division. One hundred and forty-five regiments of Territorials were also ready organised, and took the field at the end of August. They were formed in brigades and exceptionally in divisions, but were mostly employed as garrisons to the fortresses. At the outbreak of war these units lacked transport and other essential equipment for field work; in the army of Paris, however, the Territorials filled an important rôle.

The French infantry have always been famous for fine marching, and marching had been carefully practised in every regiment. The infantry weapon is the Lebel 1886, improved in 1893. It has a magazine with eight cartridges underneath and along the barrel. Although it is somewhat inferior to the Mauser as a weapon, it is not so much so as seriously to handicap the French. The doctrine of rapid manœuvre, of energetic and determined offensive, had been as sedulously cultivated in this Army as in the German, and the infantry had been trained with this grand object in view, to seize and maintain the initiative from the outset by fierce attack and rapid marches. The principal criticism which can be levelled at this tactical training is that undue contempt of the deadly nature of modern fire, especially of artillery fire, somewhat vitiated the doctrine. It seems doubtful, however, if the German infantry understood these points any better than the French, for the early German victories are to be ascribed to other causes. There existed some difference in the value of French infantry depending on what part of France it came from. It is just to remark, however, that the difference which existed was not very great, and that even if some of these southern army corps failed to distinguish themselves in the first battles, they soon reached the same standard of conduct as their comrades. Moreover, the chance which selected the respective generals commanding army corps must not be left out of the account. In 1893 the French cavalry had no equal in Europe, but it could not be said to hold the same proud position in 1914, for it had suffered very severely from the reduction of the service in the ranks from three to two years. The reintroduction of the three years law in 1913 had not had time to take effect, and the training of two classes of recruits in the same year had put an unfair strain alike on horses and instructors. Moreover, the supreme French military authorities had failed to realise the deadly nature of fire effect for an arm which offered so vulnerable a target as cavalry, and the retention of the armour of the Cuirassier regiments has been an absurdity; speaking generally, the training of the French cavalry in fire tactics and in taking cover was insufficient. In the charge, however, and in the preliminary manœuvres which lead up to a charge and reap its results, the French cavalry proved itself superior to its enemy. Although no mounted encounter of the same importance as the cavalry battles of former wars took place, yet in a number of actions the French horsemen proved their superiority to the German, and this superiority, moral and material, exercised a very important effect in the most critical days of the struggle.

The French artillery was armed with the best quick-firing field piece in Europe, the now famous 75 mm. In spite of its virtues, however, this gun is inferior in certain minor respects to the German light field piece of 77 mm. But the superiority of the German artillery at the outbreak of war mainly depended on the fact that it had an armament of howitzers with each army corps. Besides the 72 field pieces in each German division, of which 54 were 77 mm. guns, constituting 9 batteries each of 6 pieces, and 18 howitzers of 105 mm., in 3 batteries each of 6 pieces, there were also organised in October 1913 16 heavy howitzers as well to each army corps of 2 divisions. It should be explained that these howitzers fire a shell weighing 29 lb. with an angle of descent of 35°. Their effect against troops under cover is consequently very destructive ; they also proved themselves destructive against the French field batteries, which throw shells of 19 lb. with an angle of descent of only 15° at most.

The French army corps had but 120 guns to the army corps—30 batteries of 4 each—or 60 guns to each division. They had no howitzers, and had hoped to avoid the expense of this additional armament by converting their 75 so that they might be used at will as howitzers or field guns, by an ingenious device invented by a Captain Malandries. The expedient was better than nothing, but owing to the comparative size of the projectiles, and the comparative angles of descent, the Germans were left with an immense tactical advantage. In November 1913 the French Government and public were warned of this danger by General Maitrot, the Military Correspondent of the *Echo de Paris*, whom the writer accompanied to the French manœuvres of 1913 in the south of France, but the disparity in artillery had not been rectified by the following August, though doubtless it was under consideration in Paris.

Just before the outbreak of war, while Paris society was still reeling under the blow caused by the effect of the Caillaux trial, M. Charles Humbert, a Senator who occupied the important post of Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on military affairs, had attacked the whole military administration, and had laid bare many of its defects. In particular he had exposed the inferiority of the artillery armament, and the neglect to maintain the fortresses in the north-east of France in a state of defence. The question of comparing the fortress artillery of the two armies involves many technical factors, but in a general way it may be said that in August 1914 the French were woefully deficient both in heavy guns and in heavy howitzers for their army corps and fortresses, by comparison with their great antagonist. Both armies were well armed with machine guns of a deadly type, but the Germans had better understood their tactical application, and had done better work with them in peace manœuvres. With all the ingenuity of the French mind there stands a remarkable basis of conservatism especially in military affairs, which resents and opposes the introduction of improvements, and therein the German determination to profit by every new device which can be forced into military use has stood them in good stead. This remark also applies to other armies besides the French.

Considerations of economy, too, had probably been the paramount reason for neglecting the fortresses in the north of France, though it was argued with a show of reason that those places would absorb too many troops in passive defence. Garrison troops were available, however, since it was found at the opening of hostilities that the Territorial divisions were not fitted to fight in the open field, though they could have defended fortified posts. The original scheme of the fortification of the frontiers contemplated an entrenched camp at Maubeuge, besides a girdle of works to surround Rheims and Lille. The non-existence of these entrenched camps, which would have been serious obstacles to the invasion from Belgium, was no doubt of great weight in the Prussian plan of campaign. The neglect too of the outer fortifications of Paris itself weighed heavily against French strategy, and might easily have cost France the fall of the capital, even if the enemy had been subsequently compelled to yield up their prize.

THE MILITARY RESOURCES OF BELGIUM

During the last few years Belgium, like other European States, has attempted to remodel its Army, and in 1909 a scheme of reform was introduced, which was expanded in 1913. By this scheme the peace effective was fixed—3,500 officers, 44,000 soldiers, and 10,000 horses. On this nucleus it was designed to form 150,000 field troops in six divisions, and in addition 130,000 garrison troops for the fortresses of Antwerp, Liége, and Namur, with 60,000 men on the line of communication, so that the law contemplated mobilising no fewer than 340,000 men to repel an attack. The infantry on a war strength is organised on the same pattern as other European armies, and on mobilisation each company of the peace effective is doubled ; the infantry weapon is the Mauser rifle of 1899. The Belgian artillery organisation was likewise designed to expand. Each division included a due proportion of field guns and howitzers, and there were besides 50,000 *Gardes Civiques*, destined to maintain order in the interior, but also capable of reinforcing the field army. Unfortunately the somewhat complicated mechanism of this system had not even begun to get into working order when war was declared ; had 300,000 reliable troops stood upon the flank of the German invasion and within reach of British reinforcements, the German General Staff would certainly have thought twice before adopting a plan of campaign which gratuitously converted them into enemies. In Belgium, as elsewhere, internal and external politics had exercised a powerful effect on the efficiency of the Army. The trend of domestic politics had discounted the efforts of military reformers ; while the rapid increase of wealth and material comfort made military service unpopular. The necessity of discipline was not understood, and the interest of the working class was almost entirely focussed in the struggle for increasing their wages. At the same time the guaranteed neutrality of the State seemed to the majority of the Belgian people to render unnecessary all sacrifice of time and money for patriotic purposes. It was argued that the interest of the great Powers lay in respecting Belgian neutrality, that in any case Belgium was not strong enough to defend herself, and that by the mere fact of preparing for war Belgium might incur the very dangers she sought to avoid. As time progressed and as German military preparation in the neighbourhood of Aix-la-Chapelle made it clear that very large forces could be rapidly detrained and accumulated on the Belgian frontier, the party leaders became convinced of the necessity to arm, but the preliminary steps were taken too late to bear fruit when the trouble arose, nor were they undertaken with the zeal and energy which alone might have compensated for the delay in framing them.

The scheme of defence which Belgian strategists had devised pivoted on the fortress of Antwerp, with outposts at Namur and Liége to defend the passages of the Meuse and the railway junctions at those places. These entrenched camps should have been garrisoned by second-line troops while the six divisions of the field army and the cavalry division were manœuvred in the open field in co-operation with Belgium's allies. The fortresses had not however been kept up to date. Their armament was feeble, and the detached forts were not properly connected with one another. Neither at Liége nor Namur was it possible in the time to repair these deficiencies, and only four out of six field divisions, and the cavalry, were available ; their numbers were incomplete, and though this Army bore itself bravely in several encounters with the invading columns, it was shattered in the effort and driven back towards Antwerp a mere wreck. No doubt if Belgium had been accorded the same space of time as, for example, the Germans were compelled to accord to England and Russia, she would have been able to levy an Army on a more respectable scale, which was a good reason for the German commanders to make their sudden attack so as to paralyse the little kingdom from the outset. This eventuality should have been provided for in any scheme for the defence of Belgium.

When once the Germans were in possession of the territory, they took drastic steps to prevent an Army from being recruited or from profiting by the resources of the country and the patriotism of its inhabitants. The scrupulous loyalty with which the Belgian Government had observed the condition of international neutrality had prevented it from making arrangements in good time to combine with its possible allies, so that when the catastrophe occurred Belgium was left to defend herself before the French or the British forces were sufficiently prepared to strike a blow on her behalf.

THE ARMED STRENGTH OF RUSSIA

In a military sense the most formidable State arrayed in coalition against the Germanic Powers was the Russian Empire. European Russia has a population of 108,000,000, and the number of recruits annually available amount to no less than 1,200,000 men. In 1913 455,000 of these men were included in the levy. Service in the ranks is for three years in the infantry and four in the cavalry and mounted artillery. This period is reduced to two years in the case of young men with a certain standard of education, but the Russian is the longest service of any of the Continental Armies. With such gigantic resources for its recruitment the levy of reserve cadres is capable of almost indefinite expansion. The troops of the first line are organised in thirty-seven army corps, viz. : the Guard and Grenadier Corps, the corps of the line numbered from 1 to 25 ; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Caucasian army corps ; the 1st and 2nd Turkistan ; and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Siberian. Neither of the latter three military governments could be denuded of troops, but even so 30 army corps of the first line were available for war on the western frontier, and these 30 army corps were soon to be duplicated by reserve formations. In cavalry the Russians are particularly strong, having 122 regiments with 739 squadrons. Each cavalry regiment has 6 machine guns and is subdivided into 6 squadrons ; the Uhlans and Cossacks have the lance in addition to the ordinary armament. The cavalry is organised in divisions of 2 brigades of 2 regiments each.

The Russian artillery includes 449 field batteries, 51 mounted batteries, 69 horse artillery batteries, 71 batteries of howitzers, and 21 heavy batteries. Each battery includes 8 guns on war strength. The field batteries are armed with rapid-firing guns, 79 mm. calibre, howitzers of 15 cm., and the heavy artillery, 10 cm. The fortress artillery includes 276 companies and is altogether independent of the field force. Russian infantry consists of 355 regiments of 1,288 battalions; in the Russian service a regiment consists of 4 battalions instead of 3, and each battalion has one or two Maxim guns. The Russian army corps includes 32 battalions as against 24 in the German army corps. The great strength of the Russian Army consists in its superior numbers and in its capacity to replace losses of the rank and file almost indefinitely. Its principal weakness is due to the limited number of men fit for the rank of officer, to the comparatively limited number of men suitable for the rank of non-commissioned officer, and generally to the less developed educational standard of the rank and file, and a consequent inferiority in initiative to the troops of the western States. On the other hand, all history records the astonishing tenacity, staunchness, and loyalty of the Russian armies. They will face destructive losses without losing hope and the sense of corporate existence. Russian armies may be defeated, but they are very rarely routed; they will bear greater hardships, worse climatic conditions, and live on smaller resources than any others, are capable of great performances on the march, and do not easily lose their nerve power even when exposed to the shattering effect of high explosives and other fiendish expedients of contemporary war.

A capital consideration in estimating the military power of Russia is the development of her communications by rail and road. The vast extent of her territory and the comparative poverty of her railway system make it impossible for her to use the territorial system of quartering troops which has so many advantages for rapid mobilisation, and which is therefore principally in favour elsewhere. The Russian armies have had to be quartered in groups of army corps in the districts surrounding certain important military centres, and connected by the main lines of railway, for otherwise it would have taken too long to transport them from their homes to the frontier in time to meet sudden outbreak of war. Moreover, it was unsafe to quarter large forces within striking distance of the German frontier, for they might have been isolated and destroyed before the whole Army could be mobilised and assembled. Since 1910 the Russian area of assembly for a war against the Germanic powers was withdrawn towards the interior of the country and divided into several principal groups of military districts. The Petrograd district included four army corps, Vilna four, Poland five, Kief five, Odessa two, Moscow five, and Kazan two. While the improvement in the Russian railway system accomplished by the investment of French capital was gradually making it possible to rival at any rate the Austrian mobilisation in speed, a considerable development of this railway system had been projected for the near future if peace had been prolonged. The course of the Vistula, with its fortified bridgeheads in Poland, enabled the frontier forces to get out of reach of their enemies on the outbreak of war, but the German General Staff did not reckon on having to meet the main forces of Russia for six weeks from the first day of mobilisation; conversely, they seemed to have believed that these forces lay beyond the reach of the sudden attack which the more rapid mobilisation of the German forces made it possible for Germany to deliver.

The history of the Russian Army is interesting for many reasons, but chiefly on account of its rapid development. Russia had no feudal period which formed the nursery of the armies of the West, and gave them as a legacy the aristocracy which provided the foundation of their officer corps. The conquests of the Swedes first imposed upon the Tsar of Russia the necessity of raising a standing Army, which originally was roughly modelled on the Swedish system. Large numbers of foreigners, chiefly Swedes and Germans from the Baltic provinces, were employed by Peter the Great and his successors in creating and developing the Russian Army. Having stemmed the tide of Swedish invasion, the Russians began to meddle with the politics of central Europe, and their alliance with Austria nearly caused the destruction of Prussia in the Seven Years' War. Throughout the wars of the French Revolution the Russians played an all-important part; it was the destruction of the Grand Army in the Moscow campaign of 1812 which rendered possible the ultimate defeat of Napoleon. After the peace of 1815, the Russians waged war on the Turks and in Central Asia, where they gradually extended their dominion over the vast area which it now includes. An alliance of the Court of Vienna with Russia roughly suppressed the Hungarian revolt of 1848, and the Tsar maintained his grip on Poland in spite of several rebellions. In 1854 he came into collision with the forces of England and France in the Crimean War. This disastrous campaign revealed the fact that the Russian Army lagged far behind its rivals of the West in organisation, training, and equipment, but it was not until the dramatic fall of the French Empire in 1870 that serious efforts were first made to bring it up to date. Universal liability to serve was then introduced, and a number of other reforms were initiated, but when the Russians crossed the Pruth in 1877 to attack Turkey once again, the new régime hardly stood the test, for glaring defects in their military system were revealed by the campaign in Bulgaria. It was only at the expense of appalling sacrifices of life, both in battle and on the line of march, that the Turkish army at Plevna was surrounded and captured, and the road to Constantinople across the Balkans was opened by force. When the Russians reached and passed the famous lines of Chatalja their forces were so weakened and the resources of the Empire were so exhausted, that they were compelled to forgo important fruits of victory at the interference of the British Government, an interference which generated hostility and friction between the two Empires for the next thirty years.

The outbreak of war with Japan in 1904 still found the Russian Empire lagging behind the average of the great Powers in many respects. Although the Russian troops opposed an heroic resistance to the fanatical bravery of the Japanese at Port Arthur, Liaou-Yang, and Mukden, and although they never suffered crushing defeat, yet they displayed a tactical inferiority on the battlefield, and many administrative abuses hampered the command of the Army. The reinforcing and victualling of half a million of troops by the 3,000 miles of railway which connected General Kuropatkin with his base in Russia was a very remarkable feat and proved what Russian energy and perseverance could do, so that when the further reform of the Russian Army was seriously undertaken after the suppression of the revolutionary disturbances following the Manchurian War, vast strides were made in perfecting this organisation; the selection, education, and promotion of the whole corps of officers received particular attention, and was placed on a more satisfactory basis than that prevailing in the Armies of Russia's principal allies. The redistribution of the army corps in peace has already been described. Peace manœuvres were executed every year by all arms on a thoughtfully prepared and well-devised system, and the armament of the forces was kept up to date by the introduction of quick-firing artillery, and by the improvement of the pattern of three-line rifle which was found to be a good weapon in Manchuria; corruption in the administrative branches was rigorously suppressed, and the higher command entirely remodelled. The assistance of some accomplished French officers was modestly sought after by the Russian War Office in effecting these reforms.

There remained, however, one serious vice in the national organisation, and that was the prevalence of intemperance among all ranks of the Army, as well as in the civil population. The Government of the Tsar took advantage of the national enthusiasm provoked by the German declaration of war to effect an heroic reform. The sale of strong drink in Russia was limited by Imperial decree to harmless proportions, and at the same moment the Army was converted to a régime of temperance drink. It has been asserted that this great exercise of despotic power did more than any one executive measure to enhance the power of Russia and to confound the calculations of her German enemies.

The Military Resources of Britain

Although Japan and Serbia have joined in the alliance against the Germanic Empires and have both rendered important services to the general cause, yet their participation in the events of the war has not hitherto been on a scale to require a detailed examination of their military systems. The Serbian Army was nominally of approximately the same strength as the Belgian, but in reality was far more numerous and effective, as it played an important part in the war with Turkey in 1912, contended successfully with the victorious Bulgarians in 1913, and it was in a position to summon 400,000 trained men to the colours. Owing to imperfect equipment the Serbians were not able to carry out an invasion of hostile territory on a great scale, but proved themselves both in 1913 and 1914 to be very formidable in defence of their own mountainous territory. The rank and file is recruited entirely from a peasant population. There is a fair proportion of educated men in Serbia from whom officers are drawn, and in spite of the very severe losses which the Serbians have suffered their forces may yet play an important part in the *dénouement* of the war. The combined forces of Russia, Serbia, France, and Belgium were theoretically about equal to those of Germany and Austria. It depended, therefore, upon the British Empire to throw an army into the contest to turn the scale in the favour of her allies.

The British Isles have a population of 46,000,000, a military budget of 28,000,000 sterling, and placed in the theatre of war five complete divisions of infantry and one of cavalry in August 1914. The Germans had calculated on being able to disorganise the British Empire by local rebellions in Ireland, South Africa, Egypt, and India. They were disappointed in every case except in South Africa, but this insurrection was speedily quelled. After mobilising the Expeditionary Force there still remained one division of regular troops in Great Britain, and some regiments not included in it from which a seventh division might have been made, besides the Colonial garrisons in South Africa, Egypt, India, and the Mediterranean. In the United Kingdom there also existed fourteen divisions of Territorials, but a large proportion of the regiments were below strength, and of the enrolled men a considerable proportion had failed to attend even the diminutive course of training laid down. The Territorials were also very short of officers, and the officers were very short of technical training. In addition there existed the so-called "Special Reserve," consisting of 100 battalions of infantry and some fortress artillery, the relics of the ancient Militia of the kingdom renamed "Special Reserve" in the Haldane scheme of 1907. The most formidable forces outside the regular Army were the 52 regiments of Yeomanry, consisting of young men who could ride, led by officers of a class capable of being rapidly trained for war. Given a considerable interval of time with this nucleus, a formidable force might be raised, but at short notice, and to meet a surprise attack, a more unsatisfactory system could hardly have been devised. The more its details are studied the more costly and unsatisfactory they appear. The task, therefore, thrust upon the leaders of the Army at the crisis of the fate of Europe was indeed a heavy one! The great oversea Dominions—Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa—had each adopted a system of compulsory military training for their young men which was well calculated to meet the needs of local defence, but which provided no troops sufficiently trained to take the field in Europe at short notice. These Dominions, however, promptly called up volunteers for war service, and proceeded energetically to equip and train several divisions which have since reinforced the British Army.

In peace the principal military strength of the British Empire is concentrated in India, where there are permanently quartered 76,000 British troops, consisting of 52 battalions of infantry, 9 regiments of cavalry, 45 field batteries, of which 3 are howitzers, and 11 batteries of horse artillery. In India there are also 129 single-battalion regiments of Indian infantry, 39 regiments of Indian cavalry, each of four squadrons, 12 mountain batteries, and 26 Engineer companies, making a total of 160,000 Indian troops with 3,000 British officers. There are some other forces for local defence, and the total number of troops of all sorts having received some training might at a maximum be increased to 500,000 men for service in India, but here, too, there was no permanent organisation for dispatching any considerable number of these forces on an expedition oversea. The loyal disposition of the Colonies and Dependencies enabled the British Government forthwith to mobilise the British regiments abroad, and at intervals various contingents have followed the Expeditionary Force into the field. These reinforcements early included an army corps of Indian soldiers with a formidable division of Indian cavalry, besides a considerable army assembled for the defence of Egypt and for other purposes in the Mediterranean. Another small Expeditionary Force has since been dispatched to the Persian Gulf to protect the oilfields and to attack the Turks in that region.

The British military system is recruited by voluntary enlistment, but there are a number of different conditions of service. The ordinary engagement is for seven years with the colours and five years in the reserve ; the soldier serves the first eighteen months normally with a battalion at home, and during the following winter he is sent to India or to the Colonies, where he completes his colour service. The battalion at home therefore consists of recruits with a small nucleus of non-commissioned officers and older soldiers who have come home from India and South Africa for the expiration of their engagements of colour service. Consequently the same men serve both in the Home and Colonial Army, and are in this manner counted twice. The battalions of the Home Army depended on the Army Reserve to mobilise in the first instance, and the remaining reservists are insufficient to maintain even six divisions in the field for long. The Militia battalions are designed to provide drafts for the purpose as well as to provide certain garrisons at home in the meanwhile, but the maintenance of the army in the field, with the conditions which now prevail in a sanguinary war, depends mainly on the enlistment and rapid instruction of fresh recruits, and upon voluntary drafts from the Territorial units. It will be seen at a glance how immense is the disadvantage under which our War Office laboured in the supremely important matter of organisation in competition with the simple, scientific, and effective machinery by which the armies of their enemy were levied, trained, and reinforced and launched into action.

In spite of the dubious attitude of the British Government, which left in the realm of uncertainty the possible employment of the British Expeditionary Force, Sir John French and his principal officers had very wisely kept in view the most onerous and dangerous task which could be thrust upon them, and ever since French was appointed Inspector-General of the Forces they had been trained, and in some measure organised, to meet the strain of the European conflict. Yet less than twelve months have elapsed since the obsolete organisation of the battalions in eight companies has been changed into four companies, thus enabling the company commanders to meet the technical requirements of modern warfare. The quartering of the Home Army grouped the six divisions together so that they possessed a considerable homogeneity. They were well dowered with artillery and auxiliary services, with the exception of the sixth division, which was compelled to lag behind others in taking the field until its administrative services were complete. A British division consists of 3 infantry brigades, each brigade consists of 4 battalions, and the division includes 72 guns, of which 54 are field guns, 12 are howitzers, and 6 are heavy guns. The cavalry division consisted of 4 brigades, each of 3 regiments, each of 3 squadrons. Each brigade has its battery of horse artillery, and each regiment had 2 machine guns. The armament and war organisation of the cavalry and artillery therefore resemble in the most important respects the Armies of the Continent. But a very important exception is the single-battalion regiment, four of which compose an infantry brigade, an infinitely inferior unit for tactical and administrative purposes to the Continental regiment of three battalions, besides involving an unnecessary expenditure of *personnel* in the non-combatants of each regiment, with other technical disadvantages. The necessity in which each of the Great Powers engaged in the war found itself, shortly after the beginning of the campaign, to expand its armies, and to amalgamate first-line with second and third line formations, tended to equalise the disadvantage under which we laboured in the organisation of our infantry at the outset, but they told heavily against us in the opening operations, and would have told more heavily still had not officers and soldiers sacrificed themselves even more lavishly than in previous British campaigns to snatch victory out of the fire or stave off defeat. The British cavalry, on the other hand, enjoy certain great advantages over its Continental rivals, against which must be reckoned the cost of a long-service system. Our troopers are infinitely better horsemen and swordsmen than any others. Our cavalry officers had far more experience of mounted work both on duty and at mounted sports like hunting and polo, while ever since Sir Edmund Allenby became Inspector-General of Cavalry, the brigades under his command received a tactical and technical training which assured their great superiority in fighting both mounted and dismounted. It was this skilful combination of mounted and dismounted action which made the famous retreat of our army from Mons a possible military operation. The British infantry and cavalry are armed with the short Lee-Enfield rifle of 1903, the artillery is armed with quick-firing guns. Six regiments of cavalry carry the lance as well as the rifle and sword.

A very short historical retrospect of British wars is necessary to the just comprehension of the problem of defending the British Isles against its Continental neighbours. For many centuries Britain was overrun by one wave after another of invaders from oversea. The Romans established a protectorate which guarded England for nigh four centuries, though they never extended their empire over the Celtic lands of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The Saxons tore up Roman civilisation by the roots, drove the Celtic clans from the plains to the mountains, and put up the Saxon monarchy, which had but a precarious existence. For the Saxons were swiftly followed by other marauders from Norway and Denmark, who alternately pillaged and settled, particularly in the east and north of England, and at other places which were difficult for the Saxons to defend, whose centre of gravity lay in the Thames Valley or at Winchester. The end of the Saxon monarchy came from the Normans. These invaders had conquered a large tract of France, and had mingled their blood with that of the French inhabitants. They had learnt the art of fortification and acquired discipline and military organisation, bequeathed to the French by Rome. England in 1066, as in 1914, was distracted by internal jealousies and strife. Her trained soldiers were only the King's guards, and a kind of Territorial Militia, lacking arms, leaders, and discipline, formed the core of the Saxon armies. King Harold had a fine fleet, but it was not expected to guard the stormy waters of the Channel during autumn gales. So the invaders slipped past it. The Saxon soldiers were as brave as any, and their victory over the Northmen at Stamford Bridge proved how narrow is the margin between triumph and disaster in the defence of such an island as ours. In a number of important respects our luckless ancestors of 1066 resembled the generation which was absorbed with Home Rule, Woman's Suffrage, and other such problems when confronted by the aggressive might of the Germanic power, only the Saxons of 1066 had to fight without Continental Allies.

The Normans founded a military monarchy on the feudal pattern, which lasted until the Wars of the Roses used up the power of the nobles and forced them to yield their supremacy to a new nobility which had in the meanwhile acquired wealth and political influence. Many of these new men came from the cities and depended upon commerce and trade for their wealth and influence. Edward IV had encouraged them, all the Tudor sovereigns lent upon them, and at the accession of the Stuarts they were strong enough to control the Government. The tendency of our polity has ever since been towards a naval and maritime superiority. Land armies have been relegated to the second place, as mere landing parties for the action of the Fleet upon which the foreign policy of the nation chiefly relied. Perhaps the Commonwealth was the best date of our land power, for it possessed a professional Army with a legal status which was second to none. Unfortunately it belonged to one political faction, and was disbanded when the unpopularity of that faction had thoroughly undermined its influence with the nation.

Under the Plantagenets, England was chronically at war with Scotland, and busy repressing Welsh and Irish insurrections. There were also repeated civil wars, but never once was the realm in danger from a Continental invader. On the contrary, the terror of English arms obsessed the Continent, as proverbial sayings among the peasantry on its western shores conclusively prove. Henry II, Edward I, Edward III, and Henry V in turn overran the French monarchy with British armies, and even Henry VIII conducted dangerous raids far into France. The Army of the Plantagenets consisted mainly of feudal levies, the great vassals of the Crown with their tenants and archers; but gradually the custom arose of serving for pay, and with it the rise of the professional soldier. For centuries the kings were too poor to maintain these mercenaries except in time of war, when the goods of the enemy paid their expenses. Strafford was the first English ruler to organise an Army in peace, and his policy was copied and developed by Cromwell.

The revolution which substituted William III for King James II also involved the nation in a great Continental war which compelled Parliament, however unwillingly, to provide for the Army out of national taxation, and this assembly took advantage of the needs of the State to attach many conditions calculated to make Parliament permanently supreme over the military machine in peace and war. The fiction is still maintained in England that an Army in peace is but a temporary expedient renewed by a law which annually expires. Neither officers nor soldiers have any legal rights, except so far as they do not forfeit their civil status by serving the Crown. By a perversion both of law and justice it has been decreed that any dealings between the Ministers of the Crown and the officers and soldiers of the Army are covered by the "privileges" of the former, so that officers and soldiers can at any moment be dismissed without pay or pension, without any legal redress, or indeed any legal right to demand an explanation. This most illogical and impolitic state of things has certainly undermined the prestige of the military professions, and has restricted the choice of capable leaders and hardy recruits throughout our modern history. Although the lawyer politicians who have controlled the executive throughout our modern history have naturally avoided scandals as far as possible in the exercise of their despotic powers, yet the shadow of an equivocal status has prevented the Army from receiving the honour due to it, and essential to its strength if in the future it is to protect national independence against the European populations which are once more pressing westward for expansion and empire.

The wars waged in the reigns of George II and George III, until the French Revolution were in their essence naval and colonial. The Army played a secondary rôle to the Navy, though at certain crises the land warfare became the more important, and the interdependence of Army and Fleet were startlingly exemplified, as in the American War. These campaigns showed that the British people had not lost their military worth, though, owing to the lack of a sound military constitution, England was never able really to put forth her strength on land. The Revolutionary War, however, assumed greater proportions.

Between Britain and France a vital struggle arose, destined to terminate the supremacy of one or the other as world Powers. At first our Parliamentary rulers tried to wage war in the way which had prospered in the last century. Complete naval victory was achieved, and then they hoped to wear out the power of Napoleon by secondary effort on land, by subsidising allies, and generally by a limited scale of war. The attempt utterly failed. After twenty years of warfare the power of Napoleon was at its zenith, and a great fleet was being rapidly built at Antwerp once again to challenge our naval position.

Then, fortunately for us, the great Emperor committed the unforgivable strategic blunder of dividing his armies for two distant and doubtful enterprises in the extreme confines of Europe. The failure of this strategy both in Spain and Russia induced the Continent once again to rise against him, but even then victory on the battlefield would have restored his affairs had not the British Cabinet at the eleventh hour comprehended the necessity of a supreme effort on land. Wellington's army in spite of parliamentary opposition was raised to respectable strength and it pinned the French legions south of the Pyrenees, while the fate of Europe was being decided in Saxony and Champagne. Finally it was the British Army which overthrew Napoleon's last effort, and entered Paris in triumph, to conclude a war which had lasted twenty-three years and which need not have lasted as many weeks if Britain had possessed a sound military constitution in 1792.

No sooner was peace re-established than the Army was reduced to the size and nature of a gendarmerie capable of preserving internal order and of finding garrisons for India and the Colonies. Wars in these dependencies tended to maintain the military spirit of the nation, but the campaign against Russia in 1854 exposed the feebleness of our military resources. The defeat of the French in 1870 created some interest and alarm in England, but it quickly subsided amid the more congenial clash of party strife, so that the years rolled by till the outbreak of the South African War, in 1899, without any serious effort being made to set our house in order. But an army whose edge is not kept keen invariably deteriorates, and the early events of the Boer campaign sent a thrill of humiliation and consternation through the nation at large. At the very moment when several small British armies had been defeated or checked by inferior numbers of a peasant militia in the remote wilds of South Africa, the continent of Europe seemed to be meditating a coalition against the Empire, which fortunately was frustrated by the internal jealousies of the European Powers.

The Boer War proved once again that the British soldier was as formidable as ever, but it also proved that with long-range firearms leaders of troops, when operations are on a big scale, must be intellectual men with thorough technical training and in close touch with the mechanism of their profession. The war certainly changed the British Army for the better. It had brought to notice the talents of three cavalry officers in particular, who soon set their seal on the tactical training of the troops—Sir John French, Sir Douglas

Haig, and Sir Edmund Allenby. In the regiments themselves it was no longer made a crime for officers to take an interest in professional matters, and as time progressed various salutary changes came into force. The Army was organised in complete divisions under the generals and staffs which were designated to lead them in war, and peace manœuvres culminated the course of training of each unit annually.

The war in Manchuria afforded an object-lesson to all the Armies of Europe, and in particular our own officers hung their heads when they remembered how British columns had been held up in South Africa after trifling loss on the pretext of the destructive effect of "modern fire." Both Russians and Japanese once more illustrated the cruel necessity for heavy sacrifice of life when a nation stakes its existence on the battlefield. The change in the *personnel* of our higher cadres was not thorough, however. Side by side with the leaders who had won names for resolute and skilful troop-leading there remained a yet larger proportion of the old school of whom it was sarcastically said they had digested all the lessons of modern war; they put all their cavalry on foot, their infantry on horseback, and admitted a reverse as soon as their troops lost 5 per cent. of their effective. The prevalence of the old school, both at the War Office and in command of troops, continued to hold back the British Army, and to impede its development. Its old-fashioned organisation, designed for the convenience of Government departments in arranging Colonial garrisons and Indian reliefs, rather than the waging of war on a national scale, also checked its progress. The Conservative Cabinet appointed a Committee of Three, consisting of Viscount Esher, Admiral Lord Fisher, and General Lord Sydenham, to suggest reforms, which were not however put in practice, except that the chief military adviser of the Government acquired the title of Chief of the Staff, and the generals of various garrisons became titular Commanders-in-Chief. Some of these garrisons were very small.

The political upheaval of 1905 brought the Liberal party into office and Haldane became War Minister. The naval competition with Germany had become acute, and the general European situation was fast shaping towards the impasse which produced the war.

Haldane proceeded to reduce the infantry and artillery by several regiments. The Militia were renamed Special Reserve and somewhat altered in character. The Volunteers were renamed Territorial Force, organised in field divisions, and provided to some extent with artillery and auxiliary services. The training of the officers and men of these troops, however, remained too slight and amateurish for them to be of serious value without the long period of embodiment under arms which they have received since the outbreak of war. Five divisions of regular infantry and one of cavalry were also equipped to encounter the hundred German divisions. Annual manœuvres of these forces were held, which annually demonstrated that even the handling of such relatively small numbers requires careful and correct staff work, and that the neglect of half a century is not remedied in half-a-dozen years with the best will in the world.

The mind of the nation, however, was not easy about the Army. Sundry patriotic leagues agitated and lectured. A considerable section, under the late Lord Roberts, demanded Compulsory Service, but only for Home Defence, and with terms of service which hardly corresponded to the conditions of serious war. In Lord Roberts's Army, for example, the soldiers were to elect their officers; the soldier was to be trained in three months. These leagues did some good service, however, in warning the public, and certainly made Lord Kitchener's task easier when he became War Minister, because of the repeated and impressive warnings of their lecturers, who now were entitled to crow "I told you so!"

Haldane was succeeded by Colonel Seely as War Minister in 1912, but no further serious step was taken to organise the Army for war, although the military chiefs exerted themselves to the utmost to prepare the few troops at their disposal for the crash which was evidently approaching. Sir John French, before he resigned the office of Chief of the General Staff owing to the Home Rule intrigues in the spring of 1914, had officially advised the Cabinet that the Empire could not be defended by less than 500,000 field troops, with 500,000 in reserve to keep them in the field.

The best military opinion in Europe would certainly have upheld this judgment, and the event of the war showed it to have been far too moderate a demand.

Mr. Asquith succeeded Colonel Seely as War Minister at the same time as Sir John French retired, but was too busy leading the Liberal party to give attention to military affairs, which droned on in a routine way until the catastrophe of war compelled the Cabinet to begin to make serious military preparations for national defence. Lord Kitchener became War Minister, and Sir John French was appointed to lead the Expeditionary Force which it was resolved promptly to dispatch to France. The mobilisation of the Regular Army proceeded smoothly and as rapidly as the system permitted. It can certainly be claimed that the administrative machinery of the Army worked very well. The troops were ready to embark in ten days, and actually took the field between August 17th and 20th, though a conscription of riding horses had to be enforced to find horses for the small cavalry forces at the outset. With this exception the measures of the War Office for making ready the army it disposed of were entirely satisfactory. The Yeomanry and Territorial divisions were embodied without delay, and recruiting at once began on an extensive scale. Lord Kitchener's first important measure was to demand the increase of the regular Army to 500,000 men, the figure named by Sir John French to the Cabinet when he was Chief of the Staff.

As soon as it became evident that 500,000 could be easily enrolled, the number was successively raised to 1,000,000 and then to 2,000,000. The Territorial units were duplicated by reserve formations, and immense energy has been displayed by the War Office and the nation at large in improvising an Army on the scale required by the European situation. So far it can be claimed that these efforts have met with remarkable and even unforeseeable success, yet how far short they fall of the strength required to enforce our national policy in reasonable time against the might of Germany!

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

ONCE upon a time there was an absentee landlord with discontented tenants. The landlord exacted the utmost of his right through his agent on the estate, so the tenants threatened to shoot the agent, unless the landlord abated his pretensions, but the latter replied, If you think to intimidate me by shooting my agent, you are very much mistaken. Similarly, the German attempt to intimidate the Russians by shooting the Poles is foredoomed to failure. The events which immediately brought the diplomatic conflict of July 1914 to a head are still obscure, and neither the official explanation of the German Government nor of the Russian altogether fits with what is known of the military situation which immediately preceded the outbreak of war. If it was really true that war was forced upon the Germanic Empires by Russia, and that Russia's Allies eagerly seized the opportunity to attack them in rear, it is hard to understand why Germany should have contemptuously rejected the British proposal of a Conference, which would at any rate have given time for the quarrel to be settled or deferred.

From a purely military point of view the moment selected for the war was very unfavourable to the Germanic States, for the following reasons. Serbia was committed to the Triple Entente, and Italy was unlikely to fulfil her obligations to the Triple Alliance. Russia could at the moment count upon France, but the internal politics of France rendered it at any rate doubtful whether she would in the future adhere to her position in the Triple Entente with all the risks and sacrifices involved. It was confidently reckoned in Germany that in three years the law which restored three years' service in the Army, and maintained three annual contingents of conscripts under arms instead of two, would be whittled away to nothing. Though the attitude of the British Government was doubtful in a European quarrel, yet British internal politics also were taking a direction which would be likely to debar the Island Power from meddling in Continental war, both on account of Irish troubles and also of the very serious difficulties which loomed ahead in the relations of capital and labour. It was, in fact, so probable that another two or three months would put England out of action that the Triple Alliance had the most powerful motive for deferring a quarrel at any rate for that period of time. The balance of power at sea, too, pointed strongly in the same direction, and finally the increased effectives of the German Army under the law adopted in January 1913 needed the lapse of two or three years to bear fruit. So that the moment for the crisis was most injudiciously selected from the German point of view. All her possible enemies were made to close their ranks and take the field against her, while no compensating circumstances whatever justified the choice of occasion.

Having resolved on war, there were still several different plans of action open to the Kaiser's military chiefs. They might have decided to do nothing until the Russians actually began war with the Austrians. Secondly, they might have tried to overwhelm Russia with the bulk of the German forces, while leaving a rearguard to defend Alsace and Lorraine against the French. It was, in fact, highly unlikely that the French would violate Belgian neutrality, and if they did not do so the task of invading Germany through Lorraine between Metz and Strasburg, with the Rhine beyond, was not inviting. Thirdly, the Germans might have attacked France through Lorraine without crossing neutral territory. Fourthly, the attack on France might have been made through the Swiss plain, so as to turn the French frontier fortresses by the south and cut France in half. Lastly, there remained the course which they actually adopted of invading France through Belgium.

In practice but two plans came up for serious consideration—whether to assail Russia or France first. There were many good reasons to adduce in favour of either plan, and broadly it may be stated that the soundest course of the two was the one adopted, if only Britain could have been kept out of the conflict. The hostility, however, of Britain vitiated the scheme, and added immensely to the perils of the war for Germany. The invasion of France through Belgium for military reasons should not have been preferred to the attack on the Russians, unless German diplomacy could guarantee that the British Fleet and Army would not be thrown into the scale against the Germans.

In these pages the military side of the question alone is under consideration, so far as it can be disentangled from all the side-issues of diplomacy, personal ambitions, and political intrigues. It seems very probable that the German General Staff did not share the optimistic theory of the German Foreign Office that Russia would back down once again, as she was obliged to do in 1909, when suffering from the exhaustion of the Japanese War and from revolutionary troubles. The military authorities of Berlin do not seem to have been in close accord with their diplomatists, and even seem to have entertained considerable jealousy and contempt for them. It is common knowledge that the Kaiser's pet plan of rivalling England with a military navy which risked a world-wide war for the infant Colonies and trade of Germany, was disliked by the General Staff and by the Prussian nobility whose support had built up the power of Bismarck. Not unnaturally the professional soldier, the "military caste" of the journalists, regarded with disfavour the plan of attacking everybody at the same time. It would have only been common prudence to settle with such formidable adversaries as France and Russia before embarking on the scarcely less arduous task of conquering the British Empire.

Not impossibly the General Staff had become convinced that their political colleagues were not to be trusted, that sooner or later they would land Germany in war with a coalition, and that it might be worth while to snatch victory against odds by rapid action. In order to grasp the point of view of these soldiers, and the course of action they would be likely to recommend to their Government, it must be clearly understood that such advice would be given like any other professional advice, like an engineer designing a railway, or a physician dealing with a critical case. When once it became more probable than not that Germany would be involved in war, there remained but one single point to decide—how to wage that war with the best prospect of a successful issue; for no one knew better than the German chiefs that the very existence of the newly federated Empire was at stake.

However desirable, therefore, from the German military point of view, it might have been to defer the war for at least three years, yet, if German diplomacy was likely to fail, and the Empire likely to drift into a war at an uncertain date in the near future, it might be safer to seize the present occasion. At any rate Austria would be a trusted ally. If she was not supported in her Serbian quarrel she too might follow the example of Italy and slip out of the bonds of the Germanic Alliance. Moreover, there existed a fair military chance of rapid success by overwhelming one of the two great military Powers leagued against the Fatherland, before her allies could effect very much to bring succour.

When it became known that the Cabinet of Petrograd would not give way on the Serbian question, it was already rather late to call a halt, and every day decreased the chance of assailing France or Russia before they could act in combination. If once the Russians completed the mobilisation and assembly of their first line, it would be useless to attempt any surprise with the German Army, and the carefully prepared plan of campaign against France would have to be given up. The Germans, however, hate to forgo a carefully prepared scheme, even more than most people. Besides, to do so involved military objections. No plan of operations against Russia could possibly have been prepared in such minute detail as the plan actually adopted, if only that the eastern theatre was so much wider than the western and rendered possible so many more combinations and chances. Then the war in the east meant co-operation with Austria, so that Germany would not be depending solely on her own leaders and troops, but on an untried ally, known at any rate to be inferior in strength to herself. All these arguments were certainly considered with anxious care. Nevertheless there always remained a possibility of the Russian alternative being chosen, if only because France might possibly have yielded to the German ultimatum, for the time being at any rate, though it was extremely unlikely.

To invade France through Switzerland offered no advantage which in any way compensated for the hostility of the strong Swiss Army, which would have been involved thereby. Could Russia have been neglected by the bulk of the Austrian forces, there might have been some reasons for adopting the line of invasion of the Grand Army of Austrians and Russians under Schwarzenberg in 1814. The motive would have been more powerful still if it had been necessary to disarm Italy by a rapid offensive through the passes of the Alps, but with Italy neutral and the Austrians all absorbed in defending themselves against the Slavs, the violation of Swiss neutrality presented no allurements to Moltke. The invasion of France through Lorraine and Alsace, with Luxemburg perhaps also taken into the theatre of the operation, was not impossible, but at the same time was not an easy or inviting prospect. Not only were all the roads and railways barred by the fortresses of Verdun, Toul, Épinal, and Belfort, but a chain of detached forts connected these entrenched camps and formed rallying points for a defending host. Unlike the places on the Belgian frontier, these works had been kept in readiness to resist sudden attack, they had adequate garrisons, and the system of trenches and outworks at Verdun, which extended towards the frontier, did not encourage the theory that the defence could be rapidly crushed by artillery superiority, or rushed by assaulting infantry. The tactics which succeeded so well on the road actually selected would probably have been far less efficacious, though the German position in Lorraine, flanked by the strong places of Metz and Strasburg and covered in rear by the Rhine, was exceedingly strong for defence. The French attack might confidently have been met with relatively small forces, while the weight of the German attack was thrown elsewhere, and this fact was of equal importance in planning an attack on France through Belgium, or a campaign against Russia while remaining on the defensive against France.

An even stronger reason for rejecting the route through Lorraine for the main body of the invaders lay in the insufficient breadth of the frontier between Belgium and Switzerland to deploy the thirty odd army corps which would be launched for the first great blow. From Strasburg to Luxemburg is only 110 miles, a front which would have cramped the 1,200,000 troops ready to deploy for action. The obstacle of the French fortresses would have jammed up all the avenues of approach and delayed operations whose success postulated the most rapid execution. Moreover, the shortest road from Berlin to Paris lay through Belgium. It had been taken by the British and their allies under Marlborough, at the opening of the Revolutionary War, in 1814, and by Wellington and Blücher in 1815. It was the most vulnerable frontier of France and the least protected by artificial precautions of modern type.

Some of the principal military advantages for the Germans in striking at France through Belgium, besides those just mentioned, lay in the time required to assemble the German forces in Belgian territory, ready deployed for a rapid march forward on a broad front against Paris, so as to take the fortified eastern frontier in rear and to isolate Paris and its defenders from the rest of France by cutting in between the capital and the Meuse. Owing to the denser population of the western half of Germany to the eastern, and on account of the network of railways, it was possible to collect the masses of the German Army somewhat more rapidly on the line Treves, Luxemburg, Liége, Brussels, than on any line of similar length on the Polish side. The resistance of the Belgians was not expected to cause serious delay, and by very prompt aggression it was correctly calculated that important advantages could be obtained in France far quicker than in Russia. To begin a war by tangible and dramatic success is of supreme importance to a Continental Power, which has to impress the imagination of its own subjects besides swaying the sympathies of wavering neutrals, doubtful allies, and intimidating possible enemies. Unluckily for the Germans the process of intimidation did not answer with the British. The very motive which kept Continental States out of the fray would induce Britain to join in, namely, a just though tardy recognition of the great military strength of her rival.

In such a nice balance of forces as must occur in the collision between the two Germanic Empires and the Triple Entente, correct calculations as to the resources of opponents were indispensable, and herein the German General Staff made three capital blunders. They gravely miscalculated the speed of the Russian mobilisation and assembly; they also underrated the fighting strength of the French Army in the first big struggle, and their forecast of British action and British military movements was altogether wrong. These errors vitiated the German plan of campaign, and although it was successful in achieving certain substantial results, it fell far short of what was intended, namely, the destruction of the French military power in a rapid campaign so that Russia might be exposed to the full strength of the combined Armies of Germany and Austria.

The German General Staff disposed of twenty-five army corps of the line, which were being duplicated as fast as possible. Not less than fifty were ready to take part in the war by the end of August, and broadly the German scheme was to send four-fifths of this Army against France, while retaining one-fifth to guard the Russian frontier. If the Austrians had not been forced to employ several army corps to fight the Serbians and watch the Italians, they might have helped to make good the German forces held by the Russian menace. As it was, the German armies sent against France were just insufficient for their task. The alternative plan of striking at Russia while standing on the defensive towards France offered very important political advantages. Given the strong bias towards peace of the mass of the people of England, it is certain that Britain would not have intervened in the early stages of the war, and perhaps in any stage of it, had Germany refrained from all aggressive action in the west and had France attacked Germany without other excuse than her bond with Russia. It was safe to assume that the French would not venture to violate Belgian neutrality, and even Luxemburg would in all probability have been respected by them. Consequently all that France could do was to assail German territory through Alsace-Lorraine. Alsace would have been temporarily lost, but an invasion of German soil in the gap between Metz and Strasburg constituted a most difficult military adventure. The deployment and forward march of the twenty-two army corps which the French generalissimo disposed of by the third week in August would have been difficult on the available roads and terrain. Fifteen German corps, pivoting on Metz and Strasburg, could have held them at bay for a precious fortnight, and their third-line troops would have been ready to assist in the defence. At worst a defence of the Rhine would have been imposed in the earliest stage of the war, while the French attempted to reduce Metz, Strasburg, and Mainz, an essential preliminary to the invasion of German territories east of the Rhine.

What a different picture the outbreak of the war would then have presented to the English-speaking democracies of the British Empire and America! Instead of wanton aggression upon Belgium and France, it would have seemed, on the contrary, that Germany drew the sword strictly in self-defence and restrained her legions to a defensive attitude in the west, instead of sacking towns, sinking ships, and fighting battles within sound of the coast of Kent. Even in the unlikely event of the British Cabinet desiring to join France and Russia, the great popular movement of apprehension and indignation which provided the sinews of war would not have existed. The war with England would have been postponed, and perhaps avoided altogether. German trade with the outside world would not have been interrupted.

Against these immense advantages, it is true, some weighty reasons had to be looked at. The French Army was formidable. The best chance of paralysing its power was to win a great victory at the inception of the struggle. If that power was allowed to develop, and to launch forth in aggressive action on German soil, it would gather force and become more difficult to stem. But the most cogent reason of all for choosing France rather than Russia as the first objective was the difficulty of driving home a fatal blow at the Russian Empire. The vitals of France lay within reach. The vitals of Russia were guarded by inaccessibility, by lack of roads and railways, and by the vast extent of territory to be traversed and guarded before a commanding position could be held by the Germans on Russian soil—all the difficulties, in fact, which frustrated the genius of Charles XII and Napoleon. The best the Germans could hope to do in a rapid campaign of not less than two months' duration would be to capture Warsaw, to overrun Poland, to seize the passages of the Vistula and Niemen, thus driving back the zone of possible military activity into the interior of Russia, and to some extent dividing the great military centres of the north and south. It might also be hoped that the Russian armies would have been shattered in the prolonged encounter, and knocked out of the contest for several months. Then a counter-march westward of a great Austro-German host to fight a decisive bout with the French might have been planned for the third or fourth month of the war. The Germanic armies could have sent such an overwhelming superiority against the Russians under this scheme that victory in the field could scarcely have been in doubt, at any rate if they were strong enough to expect ever to win the war.

One important advantage held by the Russians, even after August 1st, was the evident lack of precise knowledge in Berlin as to the situation and state of preparedness of the Russian forces. It was alleged as a reason for assailing France rather than Russia that the assembly of the Russian army corps was so remote as to be beyond the range of a rapid German offensive, and that even if the Russians marched to encounter the invaders they could retire at their leisure into the vast hinterland of the Muscovite plains in case of misfortune and thus elude pursuit and destructive defeat. These arguments, however, contradict one another, and are not worth much. The rapidity with which the Russians began to exert dangerous pressure on the whole length of the

Austrian and German frontiers, and the vast sacrifices made by the German army in the attempts to capture Warsaw and to establish itself on the Vistula in such a manner as to dislocate the Russian railway system and checkmate the grand combinations of the Russian armies, prove that very important military results were to be won at the outset of the campaign in Poland. The German General Staff renounced their opportunity of seizing these advantages when they were to be had comparatively cheaply, in order to engulf Belgium and totally defeat the French. Belgium with its riches has certainly been seized, but the French armies escaped and are much stronger relatively to their enemy than at the outset, while the fruits of victory in Poland have also been missed; the Russians for long held the Germans in check before Warsaw and on the Niemen. They overran Galicia, captured Przemysl and Lemberg with huge booty of prisoners and stores, and on April 1st, 1915, threatened the very existence of the Hungarian kingdom all along the Carpathian range.

It is not always fair to judge of strategy by its results; luck plays a big rôle, and the personal element counts for much, but the writer committed himself to the opinion in the beginning of the war that the failure of the Germans would be due to the wrong choice they made of objective, in attacking France through Belgium. The military advantages may have pointed somewhat in favour of this latter course, though even this is doubtful now that the Russians have shown themselves to be the most dangerous of Germany's enemies. Political considerations of the most vital sort were compromised by the alternative selected, and policy should march hand in hand with strategy. Fortunately for us the Germans have transgressed their own canons in these respects on several critical occasions.

MOBILISATION, ASSEMBLY, CONCENTRATION

At every one of the many diplomatic conflicts which have furnished copy to the London press since 1900 the statement has been made that such-and-such a State has "mobilised," or has ordered a "partial mobilisation." These statements were almost invariably incorrect and due to ignorance of the nature of mobilisation. And yet it is very simple. It means to render mobile, or capable of movement, the armed forces of the State. When the order is given the regiments are all filled up to their full war complement by recalling men on furlough, and by summoning, if necessary, reservists to the colours. Other regiments, composed entirely of reservists, are formed in second and third line, to duplicate and triplicate the first-line army corps. The *personnel* form, however, only one of the many ingredients of an Army, and the summoning of successive classes of reservists is frequently only a preliminary precaution. They are called up for training in peace time as permitted by law. This precaution was taken several times on an extensive scale by both Russia and Austria between 1908 and 1914. But the irrevocable step of mobilisation, which is equivalent to "going on the war path," involves much more. It means the subordination of all the machinery of transport—railways, motor-cars, horses, vehicles, and even ships—to the service of the Army. It also implies the distribution and forwarding on a gigantic scale of military stores of all kinds; it suspends the industry and economic life of the whole nation, and arouses such an intensity of excitement, anxiety, and dislocation of the normal national existence that it leads infallibly to its logical conclusion, the appeal to arms.

Troops can be mobilised, however, without a single regiment leaving its quarters, contrary to the general use of the word as signifying movements of troops. Mobilisation merely means the acquisition of the power to move; that, however, is all-important and decisive. Regiments are mobilised whenever possible in their own quarters, where are stored arms, ammunition, new uniforms, and where the motors, horses, etc., are collected and equipped. The next step in the process of a national war is the Assembly.

When the regiments are ready to move and the State has commandeered the railways and other means of transporting them, then the great trek of the national forces begins towards the zone of Assembly, which is probably as near to the hostile frontier as the circumstances permit. In the meanwhile covering forces, maintained in peace on a higher establishment than their comrades, and having permanently the means at hand for taking the field at the shortest notice, protect the arrival by train and gradual distribution in billets along the main roads of the masses of troops from the interior. The ideal arrangement is that these covering troops should form the advanced guards of the troops they protect, when the march forward is initiated, and that army corps should be disposed along the roads so that they may form up in line of battle in a continuous line. Thus, if six miles of front is assigned to an army corps, the roads by which columns of a single corps march should be six miles apart. Main roads usually converge, and very rarely are at regular intervals, so that the difficulty of what is known as march tactics, the regulating of these parallel processions of 40,000 men, each with their animals and vehicles, requires clear heads and exact calculations, only to be obtained by careful rehearsal. In Napoleon's time very few men understood the art, but in Europe to-day the majority of well-educated officers in all Armies are capable of doing routine staff work, though exceptional talent is required to deal with the unexpected situations resulting from collisions with the enemy.

The Assembly of an army for war is the most important step in contemporary warfare which lies within the choice of the Chief of an army. If he gives an incorrect direction to his masses from the outset, the error can rarely be made good. The nicest judgment and most ample knowledge are needed for the decision as to how near the hostile frontier the main body must be detrained. To take the field too far off may lose invaluable opportunities. To come too near exposes the army to be rushed by the hostile advanced guards. As against Belgium the German task was simple: evidently they had to push on as far and as fast as possible. But against each of their other adversaries the utmost wariness and skill were required even to initiate the tremendous task they had set themselves to perform in going to war with France and Russia backed by Britain.

On August 14th outpost fighting of a more or less serious character began between the French and German forces, and the French had already made their inroad against Upper Alsace, and established themselves on the crest of the Vosges. In these combats and skirmishes the advantage lay with the French, but they were not driven home with enough force to disturb the rapidly assembling masses of the German Army. One group of German army corps, under General von Heeringen, was collected in the neighbourhood of Strasburg with a flank-guard barring the French enterprises from Belfort. The next group, counting from left to right, under the Crown Prince of Bavaria assembled round Metz, effectively screened by its outer fortifications. On its right again the army of the Crown Prince of Germany was pouring into Luxemburg, preparatory to the attack on Longwy and then Verdun. On the Crown Prince's right the army of the Duke of Würtemberg pushed through Belgian Luxemburg, having Neufchâteau as the focus of its concentration. On his right the Saxon army under General von Hausen took Dinant as the centre of its direction. Then there remained the armies of von Bülow and von Kluck. Bülow was destined to attack Namur and Charleroi, while Kluck crossed the Meuse below Huy, swept across the Belgian plain, and then wheeled southward with the hope of overlapping and turning the whole Anglo-French line of battle.

The picture presented by the German host, then, during the second week in August was a gigantic row of caravans moving parallel to one another, using every kind of vehicle on rail and road, from the centres of German population to the frontiers of France. The villages in the fortified regions of Lorraine were rapidly filling up with troops, whose front was already covered by a strong line of posts furnished by the covering army corps—viz. the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Twenty-first—permanently on the higher strength and occupying all the avenues of approach from France into Germany. Opposite to these troops the French covering army corps—the VI, VII, XX, and XXI—were similarly employed. The Luxemburg railways were at once taken over by the German railway troops, and the old-world city and principality rapidly filled up with masses of soldiers in grey-green service uniform, with vast numbers of horses, guns, and motor-cars. The Ardennes

Forest was filled with them, and the Belgian villages along the right bank of the Meuse became German billets. Stretching right back to the trim German cities and vast plains of the north, an endless series of military trains rolled regiment after regiment to the war. The fiercest enthusiasm marked the departure and passage of the soldiers, but the women showed a self-restraint that is not the general characteristic of German character. All Germany believed itself to be unrighteously attacked, and every subject of the Kaiser was united in the determination not only to repel the aggressors, but to seize from them in money and territory a compensation which would make the war worth while, and a sound business transaction.

For a host of the gigantic dimensions of the German invaders of Belgium the strip of territory between the Meuse and the frontier was all too narrow, and the eleven roads which led into France were all too few. It had been too hastily assumed by the French Command that the Germans would arrive at an understanding with the Belgian Government, and would not at any rate traverse the Belgian plain on the left bank of the Meuse. Such an agreement might perhaps have been made if King Albert had sought for it, though the Germans even then would have been sorely tempted to break it by reason of the great military advantage of an outflanking attack. As it was they merely played with the Belgian resistance, allowing it to be believed in Paris that their advance was blocked until it suited them to make the great decisive forward bound.

On the frontiers of Russia, German troops were disposed to repel raiding columns, which was all they expected to meet in the early days of the war, owing to the situation of the peace quarters of the Russians. Even then the territory was too wide to be adequately covered. This disposition was varied about the third week in August by an attack on Southern Poland in concert with one of the two principal Austrian masses whose mission it was to penetrate through Poland, capture Warsaw, and seize the passages of the Vistula. It will be seen, therefore, that while the German plan of war against Russia depended on the assumed tardiness of the

Russian assembly and concentration, the plan against France ran the risk of involving the right and centre groups, the first five German armies numbered from right to left, in a defensive struggle against a rapid French offensive while their huge columns were still jammed up in the forests and hilly defiles of the Belgian Ardennes, and before troops enough were assembled or deployed for action to establish a superiority in battle. As against the Russians the German calculations were wrong. The Russians were ready to strike three weeks before they were expected. As against the French, however, the German *coup* succeeded. The French were just too late to seize the most favourable moment for their offensive march.

Concentration and Deployment

The practice of using the word " Concentration " where " Assembly " is meant is as puzzling to the lay reader as the various meanings attributed to " Mobilisation." Technically, its meaning should be restricted to the closing in of masses of troops from the localities occupied in Assembly, or on the march. Thus concentration of an army almost always preludes the dispositions it takes up for battle, and the facilities for concentration should never be lost sight of in any scheme for the quartering of masses of troops in war. The normal sequence of military events in a plan of invasion was followed by the German army which invaded France through Belgium. First it was mobilised in its own garrisons, and the only movements of troops forming part with this mobilisation was the return march of various regiments to their quarters from country places where they were going through instructional exercises. The second stage, then, was the assembly of the vast masses along the frontier districts of Baden, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Rhineland, with advanced forces which gradually absorbed the masses from the rear in Luxemburg and Belgium.

The successful concentration of large forces for battle is the supreme test of the executive staff of an army. It is lucky for that body when the step is taken by design, and from directions fixed in advance; but more often than not it has to be managed on account of some sudden movement of hostile masses, whether in advance or retreat. Roads mostly converge towards important centres of population and trade, such as Liége, Namur, and Luxemburg, which facilitates a concentration to attack important places. When the battle has to be fought on the far side of such centres, great columns of troops must have roads, and wide detours have sometimes to be made in order to reach the appointed line. When all has been calculated, arranged, and ordered, a fresh situation suddenly developing will not infrequently once again compel the General Staff to recast their schemes and to unravel the knot of marching columns as best it can with a fresh and more difficult goal in view. The decision to seize Luxemburg was easily put in practice, but the sudden French offensive which struck at the German forces on the march compelled a rapid concentration for action beyond the city.

Luckily for the invaders the deployment of their vast numbers needed so wide a front that a considerable number of roads became available in the zone affected. To complete the illustration of these strategical processes, a word of description is necessary for another technical term of great importance, which is often used without understanding, viz. Deployment.

To deploy is to unfold. When an army corps consists of 24,000 infantry, and 160 guns, with gunners, sappers, ambulances, transport, and ammunition, it forms a procession the fighting part of which occupies fifteen miles, or a day's march for the whole on a single road. From six to seven hours at least must elapse before the tail of this procession can reach its appointed place in the line of battle. This process is technically known as *Deployment.* The infantry regiments have to leave the main road and branch off to the localities where they have to rendezvous for attack or defence to the right or left of the main line of advance. By-roads may be available, or these final movements for action may have to be made across swampy country, through a forest, or over steep ravines, and the infantry must be followed by caravans of cannon and vehicles of various sorts. Consequently a deep column takes considerable time to effect its deployment, and depends on the delaying power of its advanced troops to assure the time required for the troops in rear. This is known as the task of the advanced guard. Generally, but not always, the progress of contemporary fighting is slow. When it is rapid important victories are in sight, for then the huge columns of a modern army have no time to concentrate and deploy to rescue the defeated portion. The trench warfare of the autumn and winter 1914–1915 has not exemplified these features of the struggle in so marked a way, but the first stage of the war, from the outset to the German rally on the River Aisne, was one of rapid march and daring manœuvre, followed by almost reckless attempts to achieve decisive results with a rush. These tactics were partially successful. When they failed it was due to the discipline, courage, and tenacity of the adversary as well as to sundry miscalculations and failures on the part of the leaders and staffs who planned the *coups*. But the early operations of the war will always be of surpassing interest in military history.

Austrian Plans

While a rapid and violent offensive against the opponent which lay most within the reach of decisive action seemed to be the war policy which the nature of the struggle imposed upon Germany, the Austrian rôle was evidently one of defence. The fact that she had already embarked upon war with Serbia greatly complicated the situation for the Dual Monarchy, and the problem was still further aggravated by the apparent necessity for invading Serbia in order to maintain Austria's prestige among the dependent Slav populations on the Danube. Though the Serbian forces were far from negligible, yet they could have been held at arm's length by a comparatively small and lightly trained army. To invade the peasant State and scatter its 300,000 troops in the heart of their native wilds made a big demand on Austrian resources. So far as the Serbian campaign went the case was compromised. Serbia was attacked, but by insufficient strength, with the easily foreseen result. The invasion failed, but Serbia received damage which made the task of containing her Army a comparatively easy one for the defenders of Austrian territory.

The further necessity of guarding the Adriatic provinces, which lie within reach of a sudden attack from the Italian side, still further reduced Austria's strength as against Russia. Of sixteen army corps on her peace establishment, not less than five were detained on the Danube when she ranged up to measure strength with her giant antagonist. Nevertheless the German method of defence consisted in seizing the initiative and throwing back the menacing hosts of the Slav Power by a prompt attack on the most vulnerable and most vital of her strategic positions within reach. Accordingly, while considerable German forces were assembled to take the offensive from Posen and from East Prussia against Warsaw and the bridgeheads of the Vistula, the Austrians had to assemble one of their two main armies in Galicia between Cracow and Przemysl, while the other, somewhat weaker numerically, had the city of Lemberg as the centre of its zone of assembly. The mission of this second army was to beat back and hold at arm's length the Russian forces from the direction of Kieff, while the task of the first was to invade Poland and shatter the Russian army detailed for its defence in co-operation with the Germans. It was hoped that the more rapid proceedings of the Germanic allies would secure substantial results before the Russian main forces could assemble.

The rapidity with which the Russian armies reached the frontier districts to encounter their converging enemies was the most unpleasant surprise which befell the German General Staff at the beginning of the war. The Russians succeeded in holding the Germans in check, in defeating the first Austrian army, and in inflicting disastrous defeat upon the second Austrian army. They were enabled to do this partly by their own energetic preparations, which were in a far more advanced stage at the outbreak of war than the German authorities were aware of, and partly because the Austrians were slower in taking the field than had been calculated in

Berlin. Not only did the Russians foil the opening offensive of the Germans, but they lost no time in initiating a dangerous attack upon East Prussia.

Thus the Austrian armies were thrown on the defensive from an early stage of the campaign. At first they tried to guard the road through Galicia, which is the natural glacis of the rampart of the Carpathians, and having failed in this attempt, the defending host was compelled to contract in order to prevent the Russians from pushing through the Carpathian passes into the Hungarian plain. The Austrian railway system was poor, though somewhat better than the Russian. The tactical advantages conferred by the Carpathian range are, however, balanced by the poverty of communications through the mountains, which imposed some tactical drawback on the Austrian Command when troops had to be moved from the Danube to meet the Russians, and when movements were attempted to reinforce one or other strategical flank.

To turn from the strategy of the central Powers to the plans of the Allies, while France and Russia had concerted schemes of common military action for some years, yet the other two States suddenly involved in the quarrel, England and Belgium, had neglected to make any sufficient preparation for the colossal undertaking with which they were thus suddenly associated. Upon Belgium, indeed, was evidently thrust the rôle of delaying the German advance over the Meuse as long as possible, and also of holding the fortresses of Liége, Namur, and Antwerp to the last extremity, but no scheme had been arranged for co-operation between British, French, and Belgian forces, and the hastily improvised plan of the French General Staff to attack the German hosts assembling in the Ardennes was thankfully accepted by King Albert. Some French cavalry roamed about Namur and Brabant to encourage the natives, but no French infantry division got in touch with the Belgian field army, so that the latter had the impression of being left alone to stem the whole torrent of the German invasion, and the evident hopelessness of the task naturally blunted the edge of their resistance.

The military chiefs of the British War Office had undoubtedly studied the very contingency which occurred for many years, but a number of cross-issues confused the conclusions which they sought; in principle it being decided that if the British found themselves allied with the French against Germany all the troops in the United Kingdom which could be rapidly mobilised would be at once dispatched to Northern France, and would in practice be at the disposal of the French Commander-in-Chief. There was not even a certainty that this somewhat insufficient project would be adhered to, because some of the many noblemen who were connected with the defence machinery of the Government professed the opinion that the small British Army could not possibly be sent out of England until the German Fleet had been destroyed; and even after that desirable consummation they would be opposed to its dispatch abroad, because its numbers would be too inconsiderable to influence the fate of the Continental campaign, and also because it might be needed elsewhere—in Egypt, for instance. So that the military authorities could feel no confidence that military reasons would prevail, and if they did the numbers at their disposal were so small as to reduce the British contingent to a subsidiary rôle; nor could it possibly be foreseen to what extent and when those numbers would be reinforced. The whole British plan of campaign, therefore, had been hatched in a somewhat half-hearted way on account of the doubts attending its execution. Nevertheless, our small Expeditionary Force was mobilised with rapidity, and conveyed without a hitch at very short notice to its place of assembly in Northern France. Amiens was the advanced base; and the place assigned to it in the French line of battle was to prolong the left of the French army at Charleroi through Mons, thus threatening the flank of any German column which might attempt to march westward of the line Mons-Brussels. The British troops reached their rendezvous before the French units which were destined to support and prolong their left.

The dispatch of four regular divisions for France, shortly followed by a fifth, left the United Kingdom with a garrison of only one regular division besides the Territorial forces, so that the moment would have been extremely favourable for a German descent on the island had such an adventure been practicable. To guard against its possibility an army of Territorials was collected north of London whose mission it was to engage any German forces that might succeed in reaching the coast. At the same time the most energetic steps were taken to collect reinforcements from India and other oversea possessions. It was not possible to foresee at the outbreak of hostilities whether the internal politics of India and Egypt would demand the presence of large forces of British troops or not, but the decision of the Italians to remain neutral, and the general state of the Balkan Peninsula, together with the assured superiority of the Franco-British fleet in the Mediterranean, made it safe to begin the withdrawal of British regiments from foreign stations, though Egypt was converted into a *place d'armes* for Indian and Australian troops. Lord Kitchener was the British Viceroy of Egypt when the war broke out, and he was on leave in England. In response to the popular demand for a competent War Minister, Lord Kitchener was recalled to London, when actually on the way back to the coast, to take up the government of the War Office in place of Lord Haldane; this statesman was conducting its affairs in a friendly way to help his colleague the Prime Minister, who was also nominally Secretary of State for War. Almost the first of Kitchener's executive acts was to call for a voluntary levy of 100,000 recruits, and this demand was speedily followed by a demand for 400,000 more, which at any rate showed that the new War Minister realised the gravity of his task and the necessity for large reinforcements to swell the strength of the army in the field.

Although the Belgian resistance caused the Germans grave inconvenience until they captured Antwerp in October, and although the British forces played a glorious and important rôle in the struggle for Northern France, yet the fate of the war on land hinged upon the dispositions of the French and Russian General Staff, while the smaller Armies played the rôle of what used to be called, in the wars of the eighteenth century, an Auxiliary. Between the War Offices of Paris and Petrograd a well-considered scheme of combined action had been carefully prepared and had been kept up to date by periodical conferences of the two staffs. That Germany would turn upon France with her main strength in the hopes of defeating her before the Russian forces could make themselves felt had been confidently assumed. The Russians were able to guarantee that their forces on the Austrian frontier would arrive in time to prevent the Austrians from joining in the attack upon France. France had therefore only to reckon with the German Army less a rearguard left on the Polish frontier, since Italy proclaimed herself neutral. Provided that the Germans did not extend their right west of the Meuse, the French might hope to detain them even with inferior forces for a considerable time on their fortified frontier. For this very reason it is remarkable that the French staff should have been so slow to believe in the German designs on Belgium. It was not until large German forces had entered Belgium on August 4th that the French Command began to vary the original disposition of their five armies so as to frustrate the great German turning movement.

The first general scheme of the French Commander-in-Chief was to strike at the German troops assembling in Lorraine between Metz and Strasburg while remaining on the defensive from Verdun northwards in the Meuse Valley. The temptation of carrying the French flag into Alsace was too great to be resisted. The troops assembling at Belfort were directed to invade Upper Alsace, from Épinal the French Army pressed eastward to secure the crest of the Vosges and the valleys on the German side, while in the neighbourhood of Nancy six army corps were assembled for an advance to cut the German communications between Metz and Strasburg. By these forward movements the French hoped to gain considerable moral advantage and to strike a blow before the Germans had completed their arrangements, but they lost some of the advantages which they might have obtained from their fortified frontier, and weakened their strategic left so as to carry out enterprises on their extreme right of secondary importance. Otherwise the disposition of their troops was judicious; the mobilisation of the French Army and its transport by rail to the zone of assembly worked smoothly and swiftly, and the French nation by its calm self-restraint, and its unity in support of the Government, falsified the expectations of its enemies, who had foretold chaotic confusion and internal trouble on the outbreak of the war. In some respects, however, the Republican Ministries had failed to keep pace with the requirements of the Army, for there turned out to be a serious lack of certain sorts of war material, especially of arms and ammunition, from the very beginning, so that the French were unable to equip the whole of their reserves till fresh stores had been obtained. The working of the French railways was second in efficiency only to the German, and the army corps from the extreme south of the territory were conveyed to their post in the general line as soon as ever their mobilisation was complete.

While the French Army was drawing upon itself the whole strength of Germany so as to immobilise and use up the German first and second line troops, the Russians were to push forward the process of mobilisation and assembly as fast as possible. The German authorities do not seem to have believed that the Russian armies would come into line in sufficient strength for a serious effort before the end of September, but four weeks earlier than this date the Russians were able to strike their first great blow. Of all the nations involved in the war the Russians had the widest choice before them in directing the masses of their troops. The precautions they had taken in time placed Warsaw and the other Vistula fortresses safe from the rush of the first attack, and the necessity was imposed upon them of putting pressure upon Germany as soon as possible in order to prevent the execution of the German plan, which was the rapid destruction of the French Army in the early stages of the war. In order to attack Germany, however, the Austrian armies assembling in Galicia had to be held in check, and it was a race between the Austrians and Russians as to which could assemble the most powerful forces in time for the first great shock. Three great Prussian provinces are conterminous with Russian Poland; they are East Prussia, Posen, and Silesia. East Prussia is vulnerable because it projects into Russian territory, but its defence is much facilitated by the numerous lakes and swamps along its border. The shortest road from Warsaw to Berlin lies through Posen, but this province has been carefully protected by an elaborate system of fortresses which span the great rivers and guard their bridgeheads. Silesia is the most vulnerable part of the German Empire, both on account of its dense industrial population and on account of its lack of natural or artificial defences.

A Russian occupation of Silesia would equally threaten Vienna and the heart of Germany, besides instantly paralysing its most important industries. In the wars of past centuries the valley of the Oder has repeatedly given access to invading hordes of Slavs into the western plains. No invasion of Silesia, however, was possible for the Russians until the Prussian forces in the north were reduced to impotence, and until the Austrian forces in Galicia were mastered. The principal defensive weapon in the hands of the Germans consisted in a magnificent network of railways by which they could swiftly move large forces from one point to another along their 400 miles of frontage. On the other hand, only seven Russian railways run into Germany, the cross-communication both by railway and metalled road is very poor, and the distances from their resources are immense. The peace distribution of the Russian armies already described facilitated the rapid assembly of a large army to invade Galicia, and of another to defend the line of the Vistula in Poland. The Russians also assembled another army in the north for the invasion of the old Prussian provinces. When the situation became critical in Northern France this invasion was executed without waiting for sufficient forces to ensure success, but because of the extreme sensitiveness of the Prussian Government to the hostile occupation of East Prussia rather than on account of its strategic importance, this hasty raid-invasion by the Russians entailed the most serious consequences in spite of the local disaster which overtook it.

Given the military situation produced by the German attack upon France, the state of preparedness of the Austrian forces, the resources in troops and railways at the disposal of the Tsar, the strategy of the Russian General Staff was sound and even brilliant. While running no unnecessary risks, they did not hesitate a single day to bring all their forces within reach to bear against the enemy in the manner and in the direction which proved most inconvenient to him. The Russian troops, however, which originally took the field were but a vanguard of the immense host which has been subsequently arrayed, and the imagination is staggered in trying to grasp the picture of the Russian Army preparing itself for the war. A railway line runs direct from Petrograd in the Gulf of Finland through Moscow to Saratov on the Volga. South-west of this line the Russian Empire is less densely inhabited, contains fewer cities or towns, and has inferior means of communication than Western Europe, yet this slice of the Empire has more than three times the area of the United Kingdom, contains over 100,000,000 inhabitants, and the principal centres of Russian life and wealth. From Petrograd to Odessa is over 1,000 miles; from Saratov to the confines of Poland is more than 1,500 miles by rail.

Through large districts the telegraph had called the peasant population to arms. They had to plod through sandy roads in the sweltering heat of that sunny August to their military centres, but the intense hatred and fear inspired by the Germans in Western Russia made the war extremely popular and facilitated the energetic measures of the Government. The people worked like one man, and the only difficulties to be encountered were those of time and space, but north and east of that boundary line the Russian territories extend several thousand miles across the Ural Mountains and Siberian steppes as far as the distant shores of the Pacific, and these vast territories are only connected with the metropolis by the slender thread of a single main railway which served as the line of communication for the Russian Army in the Manchurian War. Wherever the telegraph had penetrated the people were immediately called to arms, but in many a remote district the most primitive means had to be adopted to circulate the information. Beacons and orderlies mounted on shaggy ponies spread the news beyond the bounds of European civilisation into Tartar villages and Mongolian camps, and a great stream of men of many races began to flow westward to swell the armies destined to settle the fate of Europe.

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMANS IN BELGIUM

So serious had the international situation become by Friday, July 31st, that the Belgian Government ordered a partial and the Dutch Government a complete mobilisation of their military forces; before the week-end had passed Belgium was getting under arms. The main railway line from Cologne to Liége was occupied by a force of cavalry, large numbers of motor-cars were impressed, and preparations were made to defend the two strongholds on the Meuse, Liége, and Namur, by connecting the detached forts with trenches and barbed-wire fences.

On August 2nd, without any declaration of war, the Germans invaded the independent State of Luxemburg, the neutrality of which had been guaranteed by the Treaty of London in 1867 at the instance of the Prussian Government. German soldiers arrived at the city of Luxemburg during the night, seized the station and the Government offices, and held the bridges on the lines to Treves and Trois Vierges. The Grand Duchess had driven out to meet the stream of German motor-cars, and had placed her car across the road, but she was compelled to drive back into the town and was practically confined to her palace. The Luxemburg Minister of State received through the German envoy a telegram from the Imperial Chancellor stating that the military measures taken by the Germans in Luxemburg were not intended as hostile, but simply as measures to protect the working of the railways against possible attack by the French. The little State would be completely indemnified for any damage done in the passage of the German troops.

At seven o'clock on Sunday evening, August 2nd, the German Government presented a note to the Belgian demanding a free passage through Belgian territory for the German Army, promising to guarantee the independence of the kingdom on the conclusion of peace, and to indemnify the Belgians for damage caused by the troops, but threatening in case of refusal to treat Belgium as an enemy. Only twelve hours were accorded for an answer to this ultimatum. During the night Albert, King of the Belgians, held a council in Brussels, and it was anxiously debated what answer should be returned to the German message. So careful had the Belgian Government been not to violate the strict terms of its neutrality that not only had the Belgians neglected their own armaments, but they had not even initiated the preliminary arrangements for defending their neutrality by military discussions with any of the Powers who had guaranteed it. Although the probability of German invasion was indicated by the development of the railway system on their frontier, and by the construction of sidings, barracks, sheds, and other preparations which pointed to the assembling of a great mass of troops in the neighbourhood of Aix-la-Chapelle, the danger had been for long persistently ignored by the Belgian people, press, and politicians. It was impossible for successive Belgian Governments to induce the Chamber of Deputies to take the adequate measures until in 1913 a reluctant consent was wrung from the Liberals in that Assembly by confidential and convincing disclosures.

The meeting between the King and his council was one of the most dramatic incidents in the political history of modern times. Both the King and his predecessor, Leopold II, had repeatedly warned their subjects of the growing peril of the European situation, but Belgium is a strictly limited monarchy, and the King's wishes had not prevailed upon the Parliamentary politicians till it was too late. The fact gave to the monarch autocratic authority in the crisis of Belgium's fate. No Belgian politician attempted to reject the King's appeal for the most spirited course of action, and the strongest support from any group of his subjects came from the Socialists, led by M. Emile Vandervelde. Before the twelve hours' notice had expired the German diplomatic agent was informed that Belgium would fight rather than permit the Germans to use their country, and at the same time a strenuous protest was transmitted to Berlin against the intended violation of Belgium's neutrality. King Albert also addressed an appeal to the Governments of England and France to come to his assistance in support of their guarantee.

On July 31st the British Government had already warned the Belgian Government that in the event of war between France and Germany, Belgium would be expected to do all in its power to preserve and maintain its neutrality, and the latter had replied that, its military power being considerably developed in consequence of recent reorganisation, any violation of the land would be energetically defended. On the following day the Belgian Minister in Berlin had warned his Government that the British Ambassador in Berlin had inquired of the Imperial Government whether the neutrality of Belgium would be respected. The German reply was evasive. At 1.30 a.m. on Monday, 3rd, the German Minister in Brussels had an interview with the Belgian Premier and complained that the French had already commenced hostilities against Germany. The German envoy further insisted that he had information of the intended march of French troops through Belgium. The text of King Albert's appeal to the King of England was as follows:

> "Remembering the numerous marks of friendship of Your Majesty and your predecessors, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and in proof of the sympathy which she will again afford us, I make a supreme appeal for the diplomatic intervention of the Government of Your Majesty to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium."

On the morning of the 3rd, he received the following reply from the Comte de Lalaing, the Belgian Minister in London:

> "I have shown your telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, which he has com-

> municated to the Cabinet. The Minister tells me that if our neutrality is violated there will be war with Germany."

It was not until August 4th that the British Government definitely demanded that Belgium should resist the invasion by force, offering at the same time to join with Russia and France in order to render her common assistance without delay. On the same day the German Minister in Brussels was given his passports. The German explanation of their high-handed action towards Belgium is best given in the words of the Imperial Chancellor, speaking in the Reichstag on August 4th :

> " We find ourselves in a state of legitimate defence, and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg, and have perhaps already penetrated into Belgium. This is a contravention of the law of nations. France, it is true, declared at Brussels she was resolved to respect the neutrality of Belgium as long as her adversary, but we know that France holds herself ready to invade Belgium. France can wait. We cannot. A French attack on the lower Rhine district would be fatal. Thus we are forced to pass over the justifiable protests of the Luxemburg and the Belgian Governments. The injustice which we have committed in this matter we will repair when our military object has been attained. To one who is menaced as we are, and who is struggling for existence, it is only possible to think of the means of getting out."

On Sunday, August 2nd, 30,000 navvies had been at work digging trenches round Liége. In frantic haste the Belgian War Office laboured to place the country in a posture of defence, but during the day German troops crossed the frontier at Dolhain, Francorchamps, and Stavelot. The German column of invasion was composed of three divisions of infantry and one of cavalry under the command of General von Emmich. They were drawn from the Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Army Corps, and were sent forward without their reservists, who were following them by train. The troops of the Ninth Corps were detached to seize Visé and the bridge over the Meuse at that place ; the Tenth marched by way of Verviers to cut off Liége from the south-east, and the troops of the Seventh Corps took the direct road from Aix to Liége. In crossing the frontier General von Emmich distributed to the civilian population a proclamation declaring the pacific intention of the invaders, and promising protection to person and property if no hostility were shown. It is evident that this proclamation had been compiled and printed in anticipation of Belgian compliance, and there had been no time to amend it.

Short as the warning had been, the Belgians had taken prompt and energetic precautions. The Germans found the bridge at Visé blown up, and were received with a heavy fire from the opposite bank of the river. The Meuse below Namur is a fine river, and is 300 yards wide at Visé, where some sixty yards of the bridge were destroyed. The Germans attempted to construct a bridge across the river, but the Belgians ensconced on the left bank contrived to delay the passage three days. It was at Visé, too, that the first collision occurred between the German troops and the Belgian civilian population. On a charge of treacherously firing on the troops, the Germans cleared the inhabitants out of the town, shot down many of them, and burnt the place. On the same day the village of Argenteaux, two miles up the river on the same bank, was also destroyed, and its population decimated. It seems probable that these severe measures were deliberately adopted both to terrorise the inhabitants and to shake the nerves of the Belgian authorities. The fight at Visé and the delay imposed upon the German march was of important use to General Leman, the intrepid commander to whom King Albert entrusted the defence of Liége. With only 25,000 troops, composed of four brigades and some 10,000 of the so-called Civic Guard, this general prepared to offer the most stubborn resistance in his power. The buildings and brushwood which screened the approach of the assailant from the garrison of the forts were blown up or cut down. The bridges over the Meuse, and its tributaries the

Vesdre and the Ourthe, were mined, searchlights, field telephones, and machine guns were disposed at the proper points; everything had been done for the defence of the place that was possible in the time. But the resources at the disposal of the garrison were small. Of the ring of forts which surrounded the town only six had modern armament, and the remaining six were only capable of serving as links in the chain of defence. They did not, however, alternate regularly with the larger forts; two of the smaller ones, Chaudfontaine and Embourg, were close together, on the south-west sector, while two others, Lontin and Fiers, barred a gap ten miles broad on the north-west; the fifth, Evegnée, stood midway between the larger forts of Barchon and Fléron on the south-east, and these were the three points selected for the first German attack.

Liége

The town of Liége stands on the Meuse, close to the point where the hills on its left bank come to an end, and near the spot where the valleys of the Vesdre and Ourthe on the other side afford routes for roads and railways, eastwards to Verviers and southwards towards the Ardennes. The main stream divides the far-extending city into an older town, wherein are situated the citadel and most of the public buildings, and a newer suburb, containing the manufacturing establishments and dwellings of the artisans. The most noteworthy buildings are the magnificent church of St. Jacques, dating from the eleventh century, the handsome Académie des Beaux Arts, the Théâtre Royal, built upon the model of the Odéon at Paris, the Palais de Justice, and Town Hall. Liége owes much of its prosperity to the fact that it is the centre of a rich coal district, some of the mines actually extending under the houses and streets.

Iron industries and coal increased its population from 113,000 in 1873 to 169,000 in 1910. The iron manufacturers are chiefly concerned with the production of cannon and those implements of war for which the adjoining township of Seraing is especially famous. The textile industry also employs thousands of workers, while paper, oil, tobacco, leather, gold and silver ware, bicycles, watches, and light machinery of all kinds are manufactured in the busy quarters. Known to the Germans as Lüttich, the city is the capital of the Walloons, a race who have been described as "marked by an indefatigable industry and a fierce and implacable spirit of hostility towards those who have attempted to infringe their privileges." Since its foundation the town has been the scene of repeated fighting. Charles of Burgundy sacked it in 1468, and put thousands of its brave inhabitants to death. It was stormed by Maximilian I; three times by the French between 1675 and 1691; and was captured by Marlborough in 1702. In the wars of 1792–4 French and Austrians fought repeatedly for its possession; the height of Robermont, outside the defences, was the spot where the Prince of Coburg was defeated by Marshal Jourdan on September 19th, 1794, in the last battle fought by the Austrians on Belgian soil. The citadel, 500 feet above the sea level, whence the approach of the Germans was anxiously watched, commands a view over the whole of the city and the populous and industrious valley of the Meuse, while in the south can be seen from its summit the peaks of the Ardennes and northwards the Petersburg near Maastricht and the broad plains of Limburg.

A dashing feat was performed by a patrol of Prussian cavalry in armoured motor-cars, who rode into the middle of Liége and attempted to capture General Leman, commander of the garrison. They were at first taken for British soldiers, and were only detected just in time to frustrate their scheme. In the scuffle which ensued most of them were killed, and in the exchange of revolver shots the commandant narrowly escaped. The country round Liége favoured the invaders because of the ravines, woods, and winding roads which enabled them to advance under natural cover. Having crossed the river above and below the town, the Germans attempted to surprise the place and take it by assault on the night of Wednesday, the 5th. The Belgian infantry, however, stuck to their trenches, and showed up the hostile advance with searchlights. This first attempt to rush the place having failed, the dawning day revealed considerable German losses. The Belgians then attempted a counter-stroke which had some success. Fighting now became general all round the town, but although the Germans failed to take the forts, they succeeded in surprising the bridges over the Meuse before they were blown up, by rushing into the town in a column of armed motor-cars. German military administration was established in the town, and the Belgian field troops retreated towards Brussels, leaving the forts to defend themselves as best they could, each with its small independent garrison. In the meanwhile great columns of German troops began to pour into Belgian Luxemburg. They were preceded by a long array of motor-cars and formidable columns of cavalry, whose flanking squadrons spread out across the country, and swept in front of them the Belgian patrols and gendarmerie.

The German plan was to seize Liége by a sudden *coup de main*, to scatter the Belgian field army before it was fully mobilised, and then, having occupied Namur and Brussels, there would be nothing to impede their direct advance towards Paris. The rough circle of forts and trenches round Liége formed a circumference, which is technically known as a perimeter, of thirty-three miles ; each fort lay about four miles from the town, and there were two or three miles between the forts. The Germans attempted to reduce the forts with their field guns and field howitzers, but the fire of these light pieces was quite ineffectual.

August 6th was dull and rainy. All day the Belgian lines were exposed to artillery fire, and fighting with varying fortune took place round the forts. During the evening and night the battle-stained columns of Belgian troops retreated out of the city, to the despair of the inhabitants, but a garrison of 250 men was left in each of the forts ; the retreat was conducted without misadventure, for the German cavalry were singularly unenterprising in pursuit.

From Fort Loncin, where General Leman had taken up his headquarters, the long columns of departing troops could be seen passing into the darkness, and it was not until some hours later that the Germans realised their success, but during the latter part of the night and early morning large hostile forces passed between the forts and entered the city. The Liégeois, when they woke, found the green-grey uniforms of the enemy in possession of the principal points of vantage in the town, but there were few outward signs of excitement. The German military authorities installed themselves in the citadel and the public buildings and took over the administration of the city. Martial law was proclaimed, and the Garde Civique was employed to keep order. The Bishop and some principal citizens were confined in the citadel as hostages, and the walls of the city placarded with posters threatening that if another shot was fired by the inhabitants these hostages would be immediately executed. All weapons were ordered to be surrendered, armed barricades were placed across the streets, and then great masses of German troops began to traverse the place as the morning wore on.

The announcement of this the first success of the war caused immense excitement in Germany. Frau von Emmich read the news aloud from a window to the populace of Hanover. The Kaiser himself announced it in Berlin to the crowds in front of the royal palace ; policemen on bicycles sped about the principal streets shouting out the joyful news. The net result of the Belgian resistance had been to delay the passage over the Meuse at Liége for forty-eight hours, and even now that the passage had been forced the girdle of forts cramped the German movements, for the railways to westward were still barred by Belgian guns.

For three days the Germans kept outside the range of the forts ; only small parties approached to pick up the wounded, and to burn the dead. Aeroplanes circled above the city, and large forces were to be seen from the forts marching in various directions. The little Belgian garrisons clung to the hope that the French Army would march to their relief, but on Monday, August 10th, the German artillery reopened fire upon the forts. The first phase of the siege began on the evening of August 4th, when the Germans attempted to surprise the works and carry them by storm, following up this premature infantry action by a bombardment of field artillery which was abandoned on the evening of August 6th.

Then for an interval of three days no fighting took place. The last phase of the investment lasted from the 10th to the 18th. Throughout this week the forts were persistently bombarded, and more than one attempt was made to storm them. The gallant General Leman drove from one fort to another in a motor-car as long as he could, but very soon was confined to Loncin, and one by one as the days passed the forts fell into the hands of the enemy, who now proceeded to bring up heavy artillery for their grand attack. This heavy artillery had been one of the secrets of the German war preparation. Howitzers with a calibre of 21 cm. of rapid fire were placed in battery against the devoted forts of Liége. The projectiles of these howitzers weigh 240 lb., and their range is 8,500 yards. In the German siege parks, besides the howitzers of 15 cm., the heavy guns of 10·5 cm., and the howitzers of 21 cm., yet more powerful pieces, which were unable to follow along the roads on account of their great weight, are the 13 cm. cannon and the howitzer of 28 cm. The effect of the fire of these heavy guns against the concrete and metal shields of the Belgian defences was absolutely smashing. The defences struck by shell were reduced to rubbish, the defending artillery were blown to bits and buried beneath the ruins of their forts, or choked by the fumes of the explosives.

Capture of the Forts

Fort Boncelles, which had successfully resisted the earlier attacks, was overwhelmed on August 14th. Electric light went out, suffocating fumes filled the galleries, but resistance was maintained throughout the night. At six o'clock next morning the concrete vaults which supported the guns collapsed and the cupolas ceased to work. A shell pierced the roof and burst inside, and similar destruction overtook the remaining forts whose fabric crumbled under the shower of huge shells. The garrisons were driven into the small chambers within the concrete blocks, and had to inhale oxygen to keep themselves alive. Some of the men, indeed, were asphyxiated. Storming parties could no longer be resisted, and the strongest of the forts, Loncin, the general's headquarters, finally succumbed. It was bombarded by heavy artillery at a range of seven miles, and shells rained upon it at the rate of six a minute. The general destroyed his plans and papers, put his guns out of action, and blew up his ammunition. With a handful of men he sallied out of the fort, hoping to reach the next without being seen, but was driven back. Then a German shell penetrated the main magazine, the fort blew up, and immense blocks of masonry were flung into the air. When the cloud of dust had cleared away the Germans advanced, to find the ground strewn with dead bodies. General Leman lay senseless, pinned beneath the fallen débris. He was carried out of the fort by the German soldiers and brought round by a drink from an officer's flask. "Please put it on record that I was unconscious when I was captured," he said, as he was placed on an ambulance and brought into Liége. When sufficiently recovered he was brought before General von Emmich, who held out his hand and said, "You have gallantly and nobly defended your fortress."

The forts had been built when the calibre of the typical siege gun was a 6-inch howitzer. They became a target for an artillery with calibres as high as 16 inches. The morning of August 18th beheld the Germans in full possession of the fortress, and able to use the place as a railway junction, but the gallant defence had rendered conspicuous service in the cause of the Allies. Britain and Russia sent warm congratulations to the King of the Belgians, and France conferred the cross of the Legion of Honour on the city of Liége.

Not only were the French authorities very careful to avoid giving any excuse for the statement that they had violated Belgian neutrality, but they had other reasons too for reluctance in changing the disposition of their assembling forces at the last moment. The threat of German invasion through Belgium might have been a feint, or the Germans might have gone back at the instance of the British. Then a new direction given to their assembling host would have dislocated its arrangements to no purpose; so that it was not until August 7th, after the attack on Liége in force left no doubt as to the serious character of the German offensive in that direction, that the French supreme command began to modify their disposition to meet the altered aspects of the problem. On August 7th French outposts effected a junction with the Belgian in the neighbourhood of Sedan, and on the 8th a corps of French cavalry crossed the frontier and pushed forward along the banks of the Meuse with the mission of delaying the German marching columns and of inspiriting the Belgian resistance. German cavalry, having crossed the Meuse, pushed their patrols forward into the Belgian plain, but as a general rule they avoided mounted combat with their opponents, and were roughly handled in several small skirmishes when the French brought them to action. The lull in the operations which followed the unsuccessful attempt to storm the Liége forts had induced a false confidence among the people of Brussels, but the King and his staff had no illusions. He was well aware that unless the French were capable of striking a decisive blow at the invader as soon as they had completed concentration on the frontier nothing could save the little kingdom from being overrun. The French authorities had indeed modified their dispositions so as to strike with greater force in Belgian Luxemburg, whereas the original French plan had been to deliver the most formidable blow at the outset for the recovery of their lost provinces. The movement of French troops on a great scale from right to left caused some delay when every day was critical for the success of the operation, a fact which exemplifies the great advantage of the initiative during the manœuvring stage of a campaign.

Belgium Invaded

On August 12th sharp encounters took place between the Germans and Belgians on the left bank of the Meuse, and French cavalry came into collision with German advance guards in the Ardennes. The first grim signs of war now began to appear in the capital. The King's palace and many of the finest private houses had been turned into hospitals, at whose doors motor ambulances began to deposit blood-stained victims of the early encounters. The French left wing was approaching the Belgian frontier on both banks of the Somme. It was intended that the British force now assembling on the frontier should prolong the French line and ultimately link it up with the Belgian field force. Already tales of severity and even of atrocity on the part of the troops towards the inhabitants had begun to circulate. A spectator of the engagement of August 12th, who drove out from Brussels in a car, described the scene of the engagement as follows :

> " The struggle waxed desperate, and hand-to-hand fighting occurred at several points. The opposing infantry met unexpectedly at corners of the street and turns in the lanes. To the rapid fire of the magazine rifle succeeded the even more deadly wrestle with the bayonet and the butt. In the background heaps of ruins that so lately were farmhouses still emitted pungent smoke. Between the leafy trees one saw the charred rents in the dwellings still standing, domestic animals were wandering aimlessly about. Here and there the roads were barricaded with the bodies of dead horses whose horrible wounds were gaping and spreading the mephitic reek of death. In the distance opposing lines of cannon were in action, their presence being betrayed by jets of flame and by the faint haze of dust which hung over the batteries."

It was at this early stage in the war that the world already became aware of the intensity of the passions aroused, and of the exasperated character it was gradually assuming. A war correspondent from Brussels at this juncture protested against the inhuman methods of warfare practised by the Germans, and declared that the war would assume a character of fiendish savagery unless some real respect were shown to the accepted usages of civilised nations ; both sides would end by making no prisoners. " If even a tithe of the narratives now passing from mouth to mouth about the atrocities committed by the invaders be well founded, and they are vouched for by credible and level-headed clergymen, mayors, and foreigners, and neutrals who feel no personal animus against the Germans, the soldiers of the Fatherland have already established an unenviable record for cruelty and rapacity." On August 9th a last attempt had been made by the Germans to induce King Albert's Government to reconsider his decision to yield to *force majeure*, and to permit the passage of the German troops. But this proposal was curtly declined. At the same time some clumsy efforts were made by the Germans in Liége to conciliate the townspeople by playing Belgian national airs in the cafés while their troops were levying military execution in the surrounding villages. As might have been expected, the Belgians were not conciliated.

On Monday, 17th, the Queen of the Belgians and the Royal Family went from Brussels to Antwerp, whither they were followed after a brief delay by the Ministers of State and the Corps Diplomatique. Brussels was still garrisoned by 20,000 members of the Garde Civique, who had surrounded the town with a line of continuous trenches and barbed-wire fence, so as to resist a raid of German cavalry. It was not, however, intended to defend the capital with the Belgian field forces, partly because they might have been cut off from the fortress of Antwerp, and also partly to save the beautiful city from becoming a battlefield, though it was recognised that the hoped-for advance of the Anglo-French left wing on to the plain of Waterloo might bring about a battle beneath its walls. As the German Army established a strong footing on the left bank of the Meuse, the Belgians were pushed back to a line running through Wavre, Tirlemont, Diest, and the River Neethe, which was an extensive front for comparatively small forces. In the meanwhile the situation continued to develop all along the Franco-German frontier, and the British troops landed in Northern France were rapidly assembling.

By nightfall on August 18th the long array of German armies extending from the banks of the Meuse to the valleys of the Vosges had assembled in sufficient strength to give battle to the impending forward march of the French. The attitude of the German left and centre would be defensive until their right wing had executed a wheel southward, had swept the Belgian Army out of its path, occupied Brussels, and overlapped the extreme left of the hostile array. Nightfall on the 18th beheld the masses of German troops of the first army, who had been crossing the Meuse during the last two days, settling down in their quarters for a few hours' brief repose. A screen of German cavalry concealed this movement and picketed all the roads from France into Belgium, and from Namur through Ligny to Wavre, while the French cavalry had fallen back to the heights between Charleroi and Mons. This corps of French cavalry, consisting of two divisions, had ridden an immense distance without finding any opportunity of striking home at their opponents. Their horses were said to be thoroughly exhausted, and they played no part in the ensuing struggle. The German quartermasters preceded their troops into the Belgian villages on the banks of the Dyle, chalked up on the doors of churches, houses, and barns the number of men and horses to be lodged, and peremptorily regulated the supplies of food and forage which the inhabitants were to produce for their unwelcome guests. The people of Brussels were only very dimly aware of the imminence of the peril, and every one anxiously waited to hear the result of the expected decisive battle between the main French and German Armies.

On August 19th the Belgian Army, with its centre at Tirlemont, contracted its front, but the sound of artillery firing announced that the German advance in that direction had already begun to take effect. The Belgians, fearing to have their flanks turned, fought the most difficult type of action, consisting of a series of rearguard positions, defended to gain time, followed by successive retirements. This type of fighting emboldens the assailant and shatters the confidence of the retreating troops. Pushed over the Geete through Tirlemont and along the main road through Louvain to Malines, the Belgian troops were unceremoniously hustled away from Brussels. On the flanks of their line the Belgian cavalry fought well to delay the enemy's advance, but the onward pressure of the Germans, six army corps against two, soon broke the confidence of the Belgians and reduced their rearguards to incoherent crowds of retreating skirmishers. The German artillery, too, speedily established its superiority wherever it encountered anything like a hostile line of battle.

The afternoon was hot and breathless. Great crowds filled the streets of Brussels, walked uneasily up and down, eagerly trying to glean all the news they could, and discussing the situation.

Fall of Brussels

As the shadows lengthened the real situation gradually betrayed itself. Groups of blood-stained horsemen from the Belgian right wing were retreating through the capital. These were followed by groups of even more demoralised foot-soldiers and streams of motor-cars brought in numerous wounded. It gradually became known that the Belgian Army was no longer covering Brussels. These retreating groups were soon followed by masses of fugitives from the surrounding villages, who arrived, some by train, some by tram, great numbers by road, carrying with them as much as they could of their worldly possessions, and they filled the town with tales of horror of their treatment at the hands of the German invaders. Then the order went forth that the Garde Civique were to abandon the defence of the town. This militia, composed of men of fine physique in imposing uniform, but having very little military consistency, marched by battalions from the trenches they had been occupying, to entrain for Antwerp and Ghent; some battalions piled arms, changed their uniforms for plain clothes, and dissolved. A great stream of people were pouring through the streets from east to west all the short summer's night, while from the heights upon which the city stands the glare of numerous camp-fires showed the proximity of a great hostile army. By midnight there was hardly a motor-car left in Brussels, and ere the day dawned a silence which was in striking contrast to the turmoil of the preceding evening had fallen upon the whole place.

Very early in the morning of Thursday the 20th, the German advanced troops closed in upon the city of Brussels. The streets were deserted, and a great stillness had succeeded the tumult of the night. Between seven and eight M. Max, the burgomaster, drove out in a motor-car to call upon the general commanding the German army corps. The terms demanded were the unconditional surrender of the city, for the Germans did not then know of its complete evacuation. By eight o'clock the last few private motor-cars had left the town, and the outskirts were occupied by detachments of Prussian cavalry. It was intimated that two Prussian army corps would march through the main streets, to be billeted in the suburbs until further orders. Life and property would be respected, but the German troops must not be molested. The day was the most glorious of a glorious summer, and after parties of the enemy had entered Brussels on horseback and in motor-cars, the curiosity of the inhabitants overcame their anxiety, and they swarmed into the boulevards in large numbers to watch the German regiments defile through the town.

Shortly afterwards several German columns converged through the principal streets on the march to their billets. They strode past their corps commander, General von Arnim, with the peculiar prancing parade-march which always excites the laughter of people unaccustomed to it. To the astonishment of the spectators, who had been reading for the last few weeks that the German Army was *in extremis*, suffering daily defeats from the Belgian troops, and in want of everything, the German troops who entered Brussels were smart and clean, their arms and helmets brightly polished, their uniforms new, and their ranks complete. It was explained that these must be fresh troops who had not been engaged. After the triumphal march into the capital, the troops were dismissed to their billets, and very soon crowded the streets and cafés. They conversed affably with the townspeople, and bought up cigars wherever they could. Groups of officers established themselves in the restaurants; all ranks and all regiments wore the grey-green service uniform, but their different headdresses distinguished foot-soldiers from artillery, and Hussars, Uhlans, or Dragoons from one another, The troops behaved well, and no untoward incident took place.

The city was quickly surrounded by a ring of military posts, and gradually something like its normal life was resumed. 'Buses and trams began to run, but the only motor-cars to be seen in the streets were the countless carriages of the German officers rushing through the place on some military errand, or parked in masses in the public squares.

While these events were occurring in Brussels, all the roads to Antwerp and Ghent were filled with people escaping in motor-cars and every other sort of vehicle. The steamers to England from Ostend and Antwerp were boarded by crowds who fought for standing room upon them. Northward and southward two streams of fugitives sought safety in Holland or France. The Belgian Army, defeated at Tirlemont and Diest, had fallen back through Louvain and Aerschot to Malines, and desultory fighting took place between its rear-guard and the pursuing Germans. In the meanwhile large masses of the enemy were closing up their columns for a vast wheel to the left in the country north of the River Sambre. While one army corps was detached to keep the Belgian field force from interfering with the German lines of communication, and a cavalry division pushed westwards to seize the passages over the River Dendre, the remaining corps of the first German army, commanded by General von Kluck, marched into position to outflank the whole Anglo-French line in their advance southward. The second German army, under General von Bülow, was directed upon the Sambre from Namur to Charleroi. Another division of cavalry screened these movements of troops from the curiosity of French patrols, but the hum of aeroplanes betrayed the vigil of the opposing airmen in their ceaseless attempts to discover and report the movements of marching columns.

The German Deployment

The kingdom of Belgium contains seven million inhabitants. Its men are not less brave and enduring than the rest of Northern Europe, but for the lack of adequate organisation and preparation these seven millions of people found themselves disarmed and trampled under foot by a mere handful of armed invaders. While the great torrent of German invasion rolled southward to encounter the Allies, small parties of armed men on horses, motor-cars, or motor-bicycles, patrolled the roads west of Brussels, occupied and disarmed the villages, seized the post-offices and telephone stations, and drove the population in a terrified crowd beyond the Scheldt. Generally these parties were not resisted. Here and there they were shot down by detachments of Belgian troops or local levies, which in some cases was made the pretext for cruel reprisals later on. The whole corporate existence of the State was suddenly and effectually paralysed, communication ceased between the different towns, a general collapse of all the mechanism of civilisation overtook this beautiful country in the short space of three days. Having brushed aside the Belgian forces which impeded their advance and threatened their communications, the German armies on both banks of the Meuse and Sambre were preparing with breathless haste for the decisive struggle in front of them. Since the main lines of railway from Germany had been barred at Liége and Namur, the first and second armies on the left bank of the Sambre were delayed in bringing up their supplies and ammunition, or the advance of the German right wing would have been even more rapid and even more inconvenient for the Allies than it actually was. During Friday and Saturday the German centre and left came into collision with the armies opposed to them. On Saturday von Bülow's second army fought at Charleroi, and on the fateful Sunday the 23rd von Kluck's first army, prolonging the German line westward, struck its head against the British infantry in position at Mons.

After the German occupation of Brussels no time was lost by the invaders in restoring all the means of communication and reinstating a civil administration. Although the Belgians had worked methodical havoc along the main lines, blowing up bridges and tunnels, cutting wires and destroying points, the damage was repaired by the German pioneer battalions with astonishing rapidity, and within a few days of the surrender of the forts of Liége the German military trains were running to Brussels; after a further brief delay a meagre service of trains was also open to the public, though the travelling was strictly controlled. All the country districts were placed under military government; post, telegraph, and telephones throughout the country were taken over by the Germans, though the Belgian employés were retained as far as possible. The country people having been sufficiently terrorised, there was little reason to fear any further outbreak of the civil population or any interruption of the communications of the army. Any damage done by the Belgians to these vital lines in rear of the armies was punished by death, nor were the judges too particular as to whether they had the real culprits before them or not. A war levy of £8,000,000 sterling was inflicted upon the city of Brussels, and other large exactions were made in various parts of Belgium, besides requisitions for the needs of the troops. Subsequently the German authorities systematically confiscated a vast amount of Belgian property, such as coal, the raw materials found in the factories, all the metal they could find, and all the means of transport. The heroic but unsuccessful resistance of the Belgian forces to the German invasion had in truth imposed a delay on the German advance which was of the utmost value to the French in assembling their forces, but which had the unfortunate result of giving the enemy the excuse to seize and make use of all the resources of Belgium in prosecuting the war against France.

NAMUR

After the German troops had seized the town of Liége, and while they were still attacking the forts with their artillery, their troops had marched up the valley of the Meuse, had seized all the undefended passages to the river, and had prepared to besiege Namur, which, like Liége, was guarded by a girdle of forts. The Belgian garrison included a division of the field army, and was about 30,000 strong. Namur is naturally a strong fortress. The ring of forts consists of four principal forts and four smaller ones; in them the guns were mounted in cupola turrets of the same type as those at Liége. The garrison might have just sufficed to prolong the defence if the utmost energy had been displayed in linking up the detached works with trenches and entanglements, though the deep ravines and brushwood in the neighbourhood of the forts afforded considerable dead ground unswept by their fire. Apparently the Belgian commandant regarded the task as desperate, and in spite of the vital importance of holding the place in rear of the German line of battle, for the thunder of a great battle was plainly audible all Friday and Saturday, he decided to evacuate Namur with his field division, leaving only the garrison of the forts. The first of these forts to fall was Fort Malonne. It was stormed by a German company, which succeeded in reaching the gate unseen at dawn, in mist and rain. The commandant, five officers, and twenty men were taken prisoners, but the rest of the garrison escaped. Lieut. von der Linde, commander of the German company, received the *Ordre pour le Mérite* for this feat of arms. He was only twenty-two, and the youngest officer in the German Army to receive this decoration. On Saturday the 22nd and Sunday the 23rd the works were subjected to a heavy bombardment from the German howitzers brought up from Liége, and late in the afternoon of the 23rd the Belgian garrisons evacuated their defences, which were then occupied by the German infantry. Following as it did the news of the stubborn defence of Liége, the rapid and unexpected capture of Namur produced a most unfavourable impression in London and Paris.

On this same fateful Sunday the Belgian field army, which had been collected north of Brussels, and covering Antwerp, aimed a sharp counter-stroke at the forces of the invader. One division of German troops had been left to garrison Brussels, and another division were watching the Belgian Army. It was against this flank that King Albert struck when he learnt of the march of the German main body southward to fight the Allies. The situation of the invaders was, in fact, none too secure in spite of their success over the French right and centre, and the fall of Namur and Liége. King Albert still commanded 100,000 troops, and of the two million unorganised Belgian men, many thousands possessed arms. A general rising of the inhabitants on their narrow line of communication, with the fate of their army on the frontier still in the balance, would have caused the German Supreme Command keen anxiety, and a policy of mildness to the submissive and of ruthless terror to the hostile was adopted as the most efficacious means to render their situation secure. This policy certainly fulfilled its immediate purpose, but at a cost.

Sack of Louvain

The sortie of the Belgian troops promptly cleared the Germans out of Malines, and drove them back on the road to Brussels as far as Villevorde. At the same time Belgian columns occupied Alost and Aerschot, and the Germans in Brussels, only twenty miles in rear of the battlefield of Mons, were threatened with destruction. The pressure, however, was relieved by an army corps which engaged the Belgian advance guard at Louvain. The fighting at that place was severe, and for a time the Germans were sharply pressed, but the struggle ended in the retreat of the Belgians; the Germans recaptured Alost, Termonde, and Malines, thus partially investing the Belgian army in the fortress of Antwerp. Then occurred the first of those tragedies which have disgraced the German Army, and cast an abiding slur on its fair fame. At the tail end of the fighting in Louvain, as so often happens in street fighting, some German soldiers were shot from the houses. An accusation, impossible to disprove, was made, that the civilian inhabitants had joined in the defence of their homes. The Belgians, on the other hand, maintain that the Germans fired upon one another by mistake, and point out that the inhabitants, including the police, had all been disarmed a week before. However that may be, the occurrence, certain to happen in such a war, which involved much fighting in the streets of towns, could be no excuse for the abomination that followed. The inhabitants were ordered to leave their houses; some of the men were made prisoners, some were shot in cold blood. Soldiers were employed in systematically burning down the streets, the splendid church of St. Pierre, the university, and the library. The following is the account of a Dutchman who was permitted to escape into Holland :

> " On Tuesday 25th many troops left the town. We had a few soldiers in our house. At six o'clock alarm signals sounded, soldiers rushed through the streets, shots were heard, and cries and groans arose on all sides. Our shelter was lighted up by the reflection from burning houses, and firing continued unceasingly throughout that afternoon and evening. At break of day I crawled from the cellar to the street door, and saw nothing but a raging sea of fire.
>
> " At nine o'clock the shouting diminished, and we resolved to make a dash to the station. Abandoning our home and all our goods except what we could carry, and taking all the money we had, we rushed out. What we saw on our way to the station is hardly describable. Everything was burning, the streets were covered with bodies shot dead and half-burnt. Everywhere proclamations had been posted, summoning every man to assist in quenching the flames, and the women and children to stay inside the houses. The station was crowded with fugitives, and I was just trying to show an officer my legitimation papers when the soldiers separated me from my wife and children.
>
> " All protests were useless, and a lot of us were marched off to a big shed in the goods yard, from where we could see the finest buildings of the city, the most beautiful historical monuments, being burned down.
>
> " Shortly afterwards German soldiers drove before them 300 men and lads to the corner of the Boulevard van Tienen and the Maria Theresa Street, opposite the Café Bermalen. There they were shot. The sight filled us with horror. The burgomaster, two magistrates, the rector of the university, and all police officials had been shot already.
>
> " With our hands bound behind our backs we were then marched off by the soldiers, still without having seen our wives or children. We went through the Juste

de Litsh Street, along the Diester Boulevard, across the Vaart, and up the hill.

"From the Mont César we had a full view of the burning town, St. Peter in flames, while the troops incessantly sent shot after shot into the unfortunate town. We came through the village of Herent—one single heap of ruins—where another troop of prisoners, including half-a-dozen priests, joined us. Suddenly, about ten o'clock, evidently as the result of some false alarm, we were ordered to kneel down, and the soldiers stood behind us with their rifles ready to fire, using us as a shield. But fortunately for us nothing happened.

"After a delay of half an hour, our march was continued. No conversation was allowed, and the soldiers continually maltreated us. One soldier struck me with all his might with the heavy butt-end of his rifle. I could hardly walk any further, but I had to. We were choked with thirst, but the Germans wasted their drinking-water without offering us a drop.

"At seven o'clock we arrived at Camperhout, *en route* for Malines. We saw many half-burnt bodies—men, women, and children. Frightened to death and half-starved, we were locked up in the church, and there later joined by another troop of prisoners from the surrounding villages.

"At ten o'clock the church was lighted up by burning houses. Again shots whistled through the air, followed by cries and groans.

"At five o'clock next morning, all the priests were taken out by the soldiers and shot, together with eight Belgian soldiers, six cyclists, and two gamekeepers. Then the officer told us that we could go back to Louvain. This we did, but only to be recaptured by other soldiers, who brought us back to Camperhout. From there we marched to Malines, not by the high road, but along the river. Some of the party fell into the water, but all were rescued. After thirty-six hours of ceaseless excitement and danger we arrived at Malines, where we were able to buy some food, and from there I escaped to Holland."

Another witness was Mr. Gerald Morgan, an American resident at Brussels. His narrative, given after his eventual arrival in England by way of Louvain, was published in the *Daily Telegraph* on September 3rd, 1914. He made a tour over the German line of march, and found their wounded scattered through every town and village not yet destroyed. In the absence of any German field hospitals, these men were left in any buildings available, to be removed as far as possible back to Germany in returning supply wagons, 'buses, or motor-cars.

> " After this I returned to Brussels, and we Americans in Brussels then decided that it was time we shook the soil of the country from our feet. We found that we could return to England on a troop-train, viâ Louvain, Liége, and Aix-la-Chapelle, and thence over the Dutch border. A question arose as to how long the train would stop at Louvain, but on the following morning the German staff officer at the railway station said, ' You won't stop at Louvain, as Louvain was being destroyed.' We left at three o'clock, the train stopping with abominable jerks every few minutes, like a German soldier saluting. We began to see signs of destruction in the outlying villages shortly before we reached Louvain. Houses in the villages were in flames.
>
> " An hour before sunset we entered Louvain, and found the city a smoking furnace. The railway station was crowded with troops, drunk with loot and liquor, and rapine as well. From house to house, acting under orders, groups of soldiers were carrying lighted straw, placing it in the basement, and then passing it on to the next. It was not one's idea of a general conflagration, for each house burnt separately—hundreds of individual bonfires—while the sparks shot up like thousands of shooting stars into the still night air. It was exactly like a display of fireworks or Bengal lights, and set pieces, at a grand display in Coney Island.
>
> " Meanwhile, through the station arch we saw German justice being administered. In a square outside, where the cabs stand, an officer stood, and the soldiers drove

> the citizens of Louvain into his presence, like so many unwilling cattle on a market day. Some of the men, after a few words between the officer and the escorts, were marched off under fixed bayonets behind the railway station. Then we heard volleys, and the soldiers returned. Finally the train moved out, and the last we saw of the doomed city was an immense red glare in the gathering darkness. My impressions after Louvain were just as if I had read and dreamt of one of Zola's novels."

GERMAN SAVAGERY

The sack of Louvain unfortunately was not the only instance of German barbarity. Aerschot, Tirlemont, and Termonde fared almost as badly. Dinant, Visé, Charleroi, and Mons, Malines, Diest, and Alost had the misfortune to find themselves between the contending lines of the battlefield, and were partially or totally destroyed. In many cases the inhabitants were fired on as they attempted to escape, large numbers of the men were taken prisoners into Germany, their families being left to provide for themselves as best they could, while the country was swept clean of supplies. The King of the Belgians, however, was in no way daunted by the savage methods of his enemy. He rejected every offer of accommodation with scorn, he never ceased his efforts to rally and refit his army, whenever possible, he struck back at the German garrison, nor did he surrender a mile of territory or a fort, or war material of any sort or kind, so long as his troops could be induced to continue their resistance. After the fall of their last stronghold the Belgian forces retreated to the confines of their little kingdom, and from Nieuport on the North Sea to the suburbs of Lille, including Ypres, by the help of his French and British allies, King Albert has succeeded in retaining at least a small strip of his dominions. The narrative of the defence of Antwerp and the last stage of the campaign in Belgium must be deferred to its proper place in chronological sequence.

After the occupation of Brussels the great German army, whose right extended from the Sambre to the Scheldt, stood between two foes. On their front the Anglo-French host was aligned for a decisive struggle. In their rear the Belgian field army, though defeated, was still intact. A strip of country only thirty miles across, from Mons to Malines, was at their disposal to fend off one enemy while they fought the other, and the possibility of operations from the coast added to the perplexities of the situation. Unfortunately for the Allies, the result of the great battles on the frontier entirely altered the situation, and gave to the German staff the space they needed for manœuvre. Although the French Government has not as yet permitted any account of these battles to be published, yet private advices and the accounts published in Germany make it possible to produce the picture of these events in outline. The feat of arms accomplished by the British army in escaping from envelopment at Mons, and making good its retreat while acting as a flank-guard to the French left, is known through Sir John French's dispatches, amplified by the accounts of many eye-witnesses.

CHAPTER V

FIVE FRENCH ARMIES ASSUME OFFENSIVE

THE general mobilisation of the French Army was ordered at the same time as the German, viz. late on Saturday afternoon, August 1st. As had been the case on the other side of the Rhine, military preparations, becoming increasingly definite, had taken place in the preceding week—for example, the covering troops on the frontier had summoned their local reserves to the colours, horses had been mobilised throughout France, and careful preparations had been made for transferring the whole French railway system to the military authorities, and its utilisation for war purposes. In spite of this week's grace the French mobilisation took more time than the German. The first-line army corps were ready without loss of time ; but, owing to the reluctance to spend money of a series of Liberal Cabinets, the means for a rapid mobilisation of the second line did not exist, and to a large extent had to be improvised. There seems no reason to doubt that when the first shots were fired the Germans had twice as many second-line troops under arms as the French.

An even more important reason, however, for the early misfortunes of the French lay in the mistaken strategy which aimed their first blows at a point remote from the decisive field, instead of concentrating all their strength for the principal effort. Lastly, the inferiority of a large proportion of their general officers, who were promoted for reasons other than their military efficiency, told heavily against the French arms in those August days. On March 17th, 1915, the French Government issued a statement which in spite of its brevity seeks to explain the causes of their inferiority at the outset. One military weakness inevitably reacts on another, and it was doubtless the vain hope of delaying the German offensive and thus making up for the slower French mobilisation which induced the French General Staff to attack the extremity of the German territory within reach. Another reason may have been political, namely, an attempt to hearten up the French public and arouse the enthusiasm of the French troops by reoccupying a portion at least of the provinces lost in 1870; probably this result was achieved, but at a great cost in the general situation. The following is the first chapter of the French official *communiqué* issued to Reuter's Agency in Paris and to their embassies abroad :

French Official Statement

> "Our plan of concentration had foreseen the possibility of two principal lines of action, but since August 2nd, by reason of the passage of the Germans through Belgium, our concentration was modified by General Joffre with the object of making our principal effort in the north. In the interval before the operation in the north, depending as it did upon the arrival of the British army, could begin, and in order to pave the way for it by retaining in Alsace the greatest possible number of German troops, the Commander-in-Chief ordered our troops to occupy Mulhouse, to destroy the bridges over the Rhine at Huningue and above it, and thus to flank the attack of our troops destined to operate in Lorraine.
>
> "That operation did not succeed. It was badly executed by a leader who was at once relieved of his command ; our troops, having carried Mulhouse, lost it, and were thrown back upon Belfort. The whole task had therefore to be begun afresh, and this was undertaken on August 14th under a new commander. Mulhouse was taken on the 19th after a brilliant fight at Dornach, where twenty-four guns were captured. On the 20th we held the approaches to Colmar, both by the plain and by the Vosges. The enemy had suffered enormous losses and abandoned great stores

of shells and supplies, but from this moment the events in Lorraine and on our left prevented us from following up our success, for our troops in Alsace were needed elsewhere. On August 28th the army of Alsace was broken up, and only a small part remained to hold the region of Thann and the Vosges. The object of the operations in Alsace, which was to retain a large force of the enemy far from the northern theatre of operations, was pursued still more directly by our offensive in Lorraine, which fastened on to the German army corps operating south of Metz. This offensive began brilliantly on August 14th, on the 19th we had reached the region of Sarrebourg and the lakes; we held Dieuze, Morhange, Delmé, and Château Salins. On the 20th our success was checked both by the strong defensive organisation of this region, by the power of the enemy's artillery operating in a district which had been minutely surveyed, and finally by the weakness of certain of our units.

"On the 22nd, in spite of the splendid behaviour of several of our army corps, and notably that of Nancy, our troops were brought back to the Grand Couronné, while on the 23rd and 24th the Germans collected reinforcements, at least three army corps in the region of Lunéville, and forced us to retire southwards. This retreat, however, was only momentary. On the 25th we delivered two vigorous counter-attacks, one from south to north and the other from west to east, and we compelled the enemy to fall back. From that time between the Germans and ourselves a kind of equilibrium in this terrain was established. Maintained for fifteen days, it was afterwards modified to our advantage.

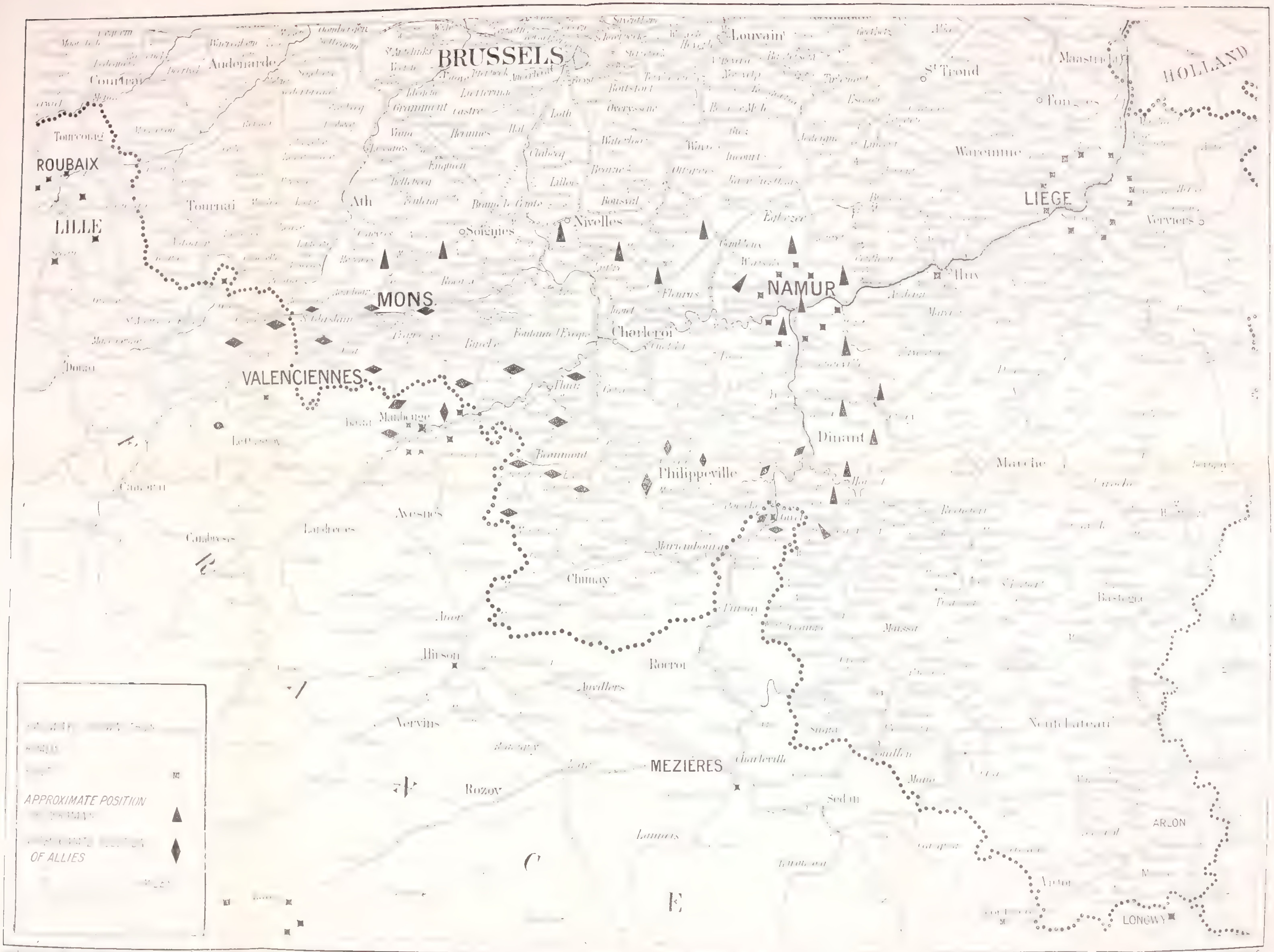
"There remained the principal business, the struggle in the north which had been postponed in order to wait for the British army. On August 20th the assembling of our troops was complete, and the Commander-in-Chief gave orders for our centre and left to pass to the offensive. Our centre comprised two armies, our left consisted of a third army reinforced to the extent of two army corps, a cavalry corps, and certain reserve divisions, also the British army and the Belgian army, which had been engaged for the previous three weeks at Liége, Namur, and Louvain.

"The German plan on that date was as follows: Seven to eight army corps and four cavalry divisions were endeavouring to pass between Givet and Brussels, and even to prolong their movements more to the west. Our object was therefore, in the first place, to hold and dispose of the enemy's centre, afterwards to throw ourselves with all available forces on the left flank of the German grouping of troops in the north. On August 21st our offensive in the centre began with ten army corps. On August 22nd it failed, and this reverse appeared serious. The reasons for it are complex.

"There were in this affair individual and collective failures, imprudences committed under the fire of the enemy, divisions ill-engaged, rash deployments, and precipitate retreats, a premature waste of men, and finally, the inadequacy of certain of our troops and their leaders, both as regards the use of infantry and artillery. In consequence of these lapses, the enemy, turning to account the difficult terrain, was able to secure the maximum of profit from the advantages which the superiority of his subaltern cadres gave him.

"In spite of this defeat our manœuvre had still a chance of success if our left and the British army secured a decisive result. This was unfortunately not the case. On August 22nd, at the cost of great losses, the enemy succeeded in crossing the Sambre, and our left army fell back on the 24th upon Beaumont-Givet, being perturbed by the belief that the enemy was threatening its right. At the same time the British army retreated and the enemy was enabled to cross the Meuse, and, by fortifying it, to accelerate the action of his right.

"The situation at this moment may be thus summed up: Either our frontier had to be defended on the spot under conditions which had been rendered extremely


BRUSSELS
Louvain
HOLLAND
Maastricht
St Trond
Audenarde
Courtrai
Tourcoing
ROUBAIX
LILLE
Tournai
Ath
Soignies
Nivelles
Waterloo
Wavre
Gembloux
Fleurus
LIEGE
Waremme
Verviers
Huy
NAMUR
MONS
Charleroi
VALENCIENNES
Maubeuge
Beaumont
Philippeville
Dinant
Marche
Givet
Avesnes
Landrecies
Cambrai
Douai
Chimay
Rocroi
Hirson
Vervins
Rozoy
MEZIERES
Charleville
Sedan
Neufchateau
ARLON
LONGWY
APPROXIMATE POSITION
OF ALLIES

perilous, or we had to execute a strategic retirement, which, while delivering up to the enemy a part of the national soil, would permit us on the other hand to resume the offensive at our own time, with a favourable disposition of the troops, still intact, which we had at our command. The General-in-Chief determined on the second alternative.

"Preparation of the offensive:

"Henceforward the French Command devoted its efforts to preparing the offensive. To this end three conditions had to be fulfilled:

> "1. The retreat had to be carried out in order, under protection of a succession of counter-attacks, which would keep the enemy busy.
>
> "2. The extreme point of this retreat must be fixed in such a way that the different armies should reach it simultaneously, ready at the moment of occupying it to resume the offensive all together.
>
> "3. Every circumstance permitting of a resumption of the offensive before this point should be reached must be utilised by the whole of our Forces and the British Forces.

"The counter-attacks executed during their retreat were brilliant and often fruitful. On August 29th we successfully attacked St. Quentin to relieve the pressure on the British army. Two other corps and a reserve division engaged the Prussian Guard and the 10th German Army Corps, which was debouching from Guise. By the end of the day, after various fluctuations, the enemy was thrown back on the Oise, and the British front was freed.

"On August 27th we had also succeeded in throwing back upon the Meuse the enemy, who was endeavouring to gain a foothold on the left bank. Our successes continued on the 28th in the woods of Marfy and of Jaulnay. Thanks to them we were able, in accordance with the orders of the General-in-Chief, to fall back on the Buzency-Le Chesne-Bouvellemont line. Farther to the right another army took part in the same movement, and carried out successful attacks on August 24th on the Othain and in the region of Spincourt.

"On the 26th these different units recrossed the Meuse without being disturbed, and were able to join in the action of our centre. Our armies were, therefore, again intact, and available for the offensive. On August 26th a new army, composed of two army corps, five reserve divisions, and a Moorish brigade, was constituted. This army was to assemble in the region of Amiens, between August 27th and September 1st, and take the offensive against the German right, uniting its action with that of the British army operating on the line Ham-Bray-sur-Somme.

"The hope of resuming the offensive was rendered vain for the moment by the rapidity of the march of the German right wing. This rapidity had two consequences, which we had to parry before thinking of advancing. On the one part our new army had not time to complete its detraining, and on the other hand our left flank on August 31st was too exposed to the enemy's attack. Our line, thus modified, contained curves which had to be redressed before we could pass to the offensive. To understand this it is sufficient to consider the situation created by the quick advance of the enemy on the evening of September 2nd.

"A corps of cavalry had crossed the Oise, and it advanced as far as Château Thierry. The first army (General von Kluck), comprising four active army corps and a reserve corps, had passed Compiègne. The second army (General von Bülow) —three active army corps and two reserve corps—was reaching the Laon region. The third army (General von Hausen)—two active army corps and a reserve corps—had crossed the Aisne between the Château Porcien and Attigny. More to the east the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh armies, namely, twelve army corps, four reserve corps, and numerous Ersatz formations, were in contact with our troops, the fourth and fifth armies between Vouziers and Verdun and the others in the position which has been indicated above, from Verdun to the Vosges.

"It will therefore be seen that our left, if we accepted battle, might be in great peril. A defeat in these conditions would have cut off our armies from Paris and from the British Forces, and at the same time from the new army which had been constituted to the left of the English. We should thus be running the risk of losing by a single stroke the advantage of the assistance which Russia later on was to furnish. General Joffre chose resolutely for the solution which disposed of these risks—that is to say, for postponing the offensive and the continuation of the retreat.

"In this way he remained on ground which he had chosen. He waited only until he could engage in better conditions. In consequence, on September 1st he fixed, as an extreme limit for the movement of retreat, which was still going on, the line Bray-sur-Seine, Nogent-sur-Seine, Arcis-sur-Aube, Vitry-le-François, the region to the north of Bar-le-Duc. This line should be reached if the troops were compelled to go back so far. They would attack before reaching it, as soon as there was a possibility of bringing about an offensive disposition permitting the co-operation of the whole of our Forces.

"On September 5th it appeared that this desired situation existed. The first German army, carrying audacity to temerity, had continued to endeavour to envelop our left, had crossed the Grand Morin, and reached the region of Chauffry, to the south of Rebais and of Esternay. It aimed then at cutting our armies off from Paris, in order to begin the investment of the capital. The second army had its head on the line Champaubert, Etoges, Bergeres, and Vertus. The third and fourth reached to Châlons-sur-Marne and Bussy-le-Repos. The fifth was advancing on one side and the other from the Argonne, as far as Posesse to Triancourt-les-Islettes and Julvecourt. The sixth and seventh armies were attacking more to the east. But—and here is a capital difference between the situation of Sep-

> tember 5th and that of September 2nd—the envelopment of our left was no longer possible.
>
> "In the first place, our left army had been able to occupy the line Sezanne, Villers-St. Georges, and Courchamps. Furthermore, the British Forces gathered between the Seine and the Marne, flanked on their left by the newly-created army, were closely connected with the rest of our Forces. This was precisely the disposition which the General-in-Chief had wished to see achieved. On the 4th he decided to take advantage of it, and ordered all the armies to hold themselves ready."

General Joffre, the French Commander-in-Chief, had taken from his right two new army corps, two divisions of infantry, and two divisions of cavalry, which were distributed between his left and his centre. On the evening of the 5th he addressed to all the commanders of armies a message ordering them to attack. "The hour has come," he wrote, "to advance at all costs, and to die where you stand rather than give way."

Seeing that the intention of the German supreme Command to assail France through Belgium was manifested as early as the night of August 2nd, when the German ultimatum was presented in Brussels and telegraphed on to Paris, the statement published eight months later by the French Government does not altogether explain their strategy. It seems probable, at any rate, that the French seized the initiative to fix the locality of the first great battles by invading Alsace-Lorraine and so to divert important Forces from the German right wing marching through Belgium. To a limited extent this object was achieved, for the Germans were compelled to array in Lorraine and Alsace sufficient army corps to keep the French right wing in check, and although the French plan did not make the most economical use of the totality of their Forces, yet its failure was due principally to tactical defeat on the battlefield and to the speedier arrival of the German Forces in the theatre of war. The general disposition of the French armies on August 18th, the eve of the first great battle, was as follows:

Thirteen army corps, each probably consisting of thirty battalions, were allotted to the defence of the north-east frontier from Verdun to Charleroi. On the left of these Forces the British, Belgians, and the French army of reserve divisions were assembling, and were reckoned to outflank the German offensive flank. Five French army corps of the first line and one of the reserve were assembled on the line Pont-au-Mousson-Nancy-Lunéville. This army threatened to penetrate between Metz and Strasburg, and thus menaced the left of the German Forces operating in the Ardennes. Three other corps of the first line were detailed to attack Upper Alsace, both in the Vosges and in the plain.

At the same date the German armies were disposed as follows: The first army was preparing to occupy Brussels and to mask Antwerp. Another of its columns was heading for Tournay and Lille. Its main body was preparing to traverse the plain south of Brussels in order to attack the British at Mons. The second army had invested Namur, and was heading for Charleroi and Maubeuge; the third, marching through Malmédy, had Givet as its objective; the fourth, having detrained in the same region, was to march through the Ardennes on Sedan; the fifth, commanded by the Crown Prince of Germany, from Treves and Luxemburg, was to march through Arlon against Longwy. To the army of the Crown Prince was assigned the task of investing Verdun. For the defence of Lorraine in the neighbourhood of Metz the sixth German army, under the Crown Prince of Bavaria, was assembled; it was this army which encountered the offensive of the French at Nancy. On its left yet a seventh German army, from Strasburg, was marching on Lunéville. In the Vosges and in Upper Alsace several reserve divisions held the French attacks in check. The strength of these various German armies was unequal. The third Saxon army, under General von Hausen, included only three Saxon corps, while the first, fifth, and sixth each mustered six. The average strength of these armies when operations opened was five or six army corps. It must be remembered that an army in the field is in a perpetual state of transition; even if it retains all its units a constant stream of injured men daily leave its ranks, and a compensating stream of reinforcements, which from time to time include new units, are on the way to take their place. In spite of the utmost efforts of the best organisation the numbers in the regiments in the field inevitably tend to diminish.

The war actually began on August 4th, and from that day onward the opposing Forces gradually came into contact. The first encounters on the Franco-German frontier were between patrols and foraging parties. Gradually these affairs increased in importance. Determined attempts were made to seize and retain localities, which led to combats of tactical importance. In the early days the French cavalry crossed the frontier in considerable strength, and inflicted damage on the German railways, but soon were compelled to retire in the presence of the enemy's infantry and artillery. On August 8th the French Seventh Corps from Belfort advanced and took the towns of Altkirch and Mulhouse, but they were compelled to evacuate Mulhouse on the 11th. In the interval the French troops had surprised and seized a number of points in the crests of the Vosges Mountains, most of which they have retained and connected by a network of trenches. Fierce fighting has never ceased in these wooded ravines where in the early autumn the hostile lines became continuous. On August 14th the French resumed their offensive in Alsace and in the Vosges, the assembling of General de Castelnau's army in the region of Nancy was complete by nightfall on the 18th, and on the following morning fighting became general along the front of the armies ; the Germans on the right bank of the Meuse reached the line Dinant-Neuve Chapelle with their fourth and fifth armies. North of Namur a cavalry duel took place in which the French had the advantage, and during the day the Nancy army having crossed the German frontier in several parallel columns, pushed on as far as Dieuze; in Southern Alsace the French recaptured Mulhouse, and reoccupied the villages in its neighbourhood.

In spite of the utmost efforts of airmen and cavalry patrols the French had not succeeded in discovering the numerical strength of the Forces opposed to them. It is true that the country in Lorraine lends itself to the concealment of military movements on a great scale, for it is hilly, covered with forest, and in places intersected with lakes, and the easy success of the French advance-guard on August 18th, when they pushed the Germans beyond the frontier, engendered false confidence. The main road from Nancy through Château Salins to Morhange and Saarguemines was the axis of the French advance. On the French right wing to the east of Dieuze, lay a tangled district of forest and lakes named Les Etangs. A main road from Château Salins to Saarburg traverses this district, and another main road running north-eastward from Dieuze to Penétrange skirts its northern extremity, while a chain of wooded hills indented with deep and narrow ravines lies to the north of Château Salins.

On the afternoon of August 19th the French left held Delmé and the hills, 1,200 ft. high, to the north-west of it. This block of hills, whose crest runs parallel to the road from Château Salins to Metz for four miles, dominates the neighbouring country, so that the situation of the French army was strong for local defence, and could not easily be turned. Good roads ran along the entire line, and in case of disaster retreat in the direction of Nancy was secure, but the French army was imbued with the spirit of the offensive, and its gallant commander was resolved to open the war with a dazzling victory for French arms. He knew that a considerable German army was posted on his front, but seems to have rated it at only three or four army corps, whereas its real strength was at least six; moreover the French general was not aware of the superiority of the German artillery. A dozen miles beyond his left stood the fortress girdle of Metz, and on his right beyond the lakes yet another German army was collecting, of the strength of which he was badly informed. Parenthetically it may be remarked that the French service of intelligence had not been properly organised in peace, and was ineffectually performed at the outbreak of the war.

The plan of the French commander was to deal with the troops on his immediate front while he checked the German Forces menacing his right by an offensive stroke. The lake district east of Dieuze covered and protected his offensive movement, but it has been asserted that he employed too large a proportion of his Forces on the right wing against the seventh German army operating from Saarburg, and too small a proportion in his centre and left against the sixth German army, which was posted on a line of hills whose centre was the height at Morhange. The German right extended in a semi-circle on wooded hills round the French left. Their batteries were posted on a convenient slope on the reverse side of the crest, and were concealed by the woods from French aeroplanes, the range of all prominent points on their front had been carefully measured. The German infantry were skilfully entrenched in tiers on the hillside, or along the foot of the range, and a chain of villages was occupied by the German riflemen, which had been carefully prepared for defence, thus the villages of Morville, Morhange, Vensdorf, Finstingen, and Pfalzburg were the pivots of the German line of battle.

All the 19th the Germans had been hard at work fortifying this position and concealing their guns. Early in the morning of the 20th the sky-blue tunics of the French Hussars were seen emerging from the woods in numerous parties, trying to gain ground and to approach the German lines. Then on the road to Heming a great column of French cavalry with batteries and cyclists came into sight. When this target fairly presented itself the German batteries opened upon it with a storm of shrapnel. The cavalry were thrown into confusion and forced to retire. A little later parties of infantry skirmishers also began to trickle through the woods and to press forward across the narrow valley along the whole twenty miles of front. Wherever close columns showed themselves, which they did too recklessly in many instances, they were smothered with German shrapnel. Although the French behaved too recklessly, and treated their formidable enemy at first with a sort of contempt, yet the French infantry had been well trained, and its supple company columns rapidly glided forward, availing themselves of what cover could be found. Numerous batteries of the French army corps came into action, so that the trusty French field gun at length found itself pitted against the rival artillery. The French would have had no reason to regret the event had it not been for the curved fire of the German howitzers, which threw a heavier shell from unseen positions, and which dismounted the French guns, blew up their ammunition, and destroyed their *personnel* wherever they could be seen. In less than two hours a gigantic pitched battle had kindled, which was being fought with the utmost zest on either side. It seemed as if the combatants believed that the event of the whole war hinged upon this day's work, and in spite of their strong positions the Germans were severely pressed by the advancing tide of French skirmishers, who attacked with the utmost spirit and *élan*.

As the battle developed and intensified, all the new apparatus of war, seen for the first time upon an European field, came into play. Aeroplanes circled continually overhead, of both armies, and motor-cars and motor-bicycles never ceased to rush up and down the numerous roads which intersected the battlefield. Even the private cars of individuals ventured within range of the shells in order to pick up the wounded, and perhaps to obtain a glimpse of the drama. The roar of the battle could be plainly heard in Nancy, whence the wire conveyed the news to Paris of the opening of the struggle.

The crisis of the battle was reached when the German centre from Morhange to Conthil was attacked by the French 15th Army Corps from Marseilles, but the French artillery had not succeeded in silencing the German batteries, which formed the ribs of this part of the German line of battle, when the attack was launched. The French guns, however, continued to support their troops with rapid fire as swarms of French skirmishers pressed forward in long successive lines, advancing by rushes and lying down to fire until they came within close range of the German infantry; but the German machine-guns in large numbers, firing along the ground line from their low mountings, mowed down the attacking infantry. The French infantry, however, persisted in pressing to the assault somewhat recklessly; suddenly their determination faltered, the bonds of discipline which held the regiments together snapped, and the shattered divisions of the fifteenth corps reeled back along the valley in wild confusion, losing hundreds of men from the fire of the pursuers, and thus becoming more and more disorganised. The wreck of this army corps was the signal for a general counter-attack by the Germans on the French. Emerging from their trenches and hiding-places, the German infantry in turn swarmed to the assault, still covered and protected by the continuous fire of their guns and howitzers. General de Castelnau had no alternative but to command a retirement of his whole army.

The relics of the 15th Corps retreated along the railway from Conthil to Château Salins and on the other bank of the Petit Seille. Wherever the retreating troops clustered in a group they were pursued first with the rifle and machine-guns of the Germans and then with sprays of shrapnel from the high ground west of Morhange. At the same time the German left wing from the direction of Saarburg began to develop an attack south of Dieuze. The situation of the French army was very critical, but it was saved from destruction by the skilful orders promptly issued of General de Castelnau to organise the retreat: while the French left still continued to hold good in the neighbourhood of Delmé and the wooded hills north of it, the 20th Corps were thrown into the gap in the centre and formed a rearguard which barred the direct road to Château Salins against the Bavarian troops forming the German centre, while the French right were also gradually withdrawn out of reach of the German guns. The retreat of the French masses towards a fresh position east of Nancy was continued during the sultry hours of the August afternoon. Many companies were perforce left behind, ensconced in dingles in the woods or beyond reach of the order to join in the general retirement. The German fire had broken up many units, so that the woods were filled with isolated groups of French soldiers, a large number of whom fell into the hands of the enemy. The Germans also captured a large number of guns, vehicles, and stores of all sorts.

At the same moment as the French attack on Morhange disastrously failed, another German army was making its triumphant entry into Brussels, so that the exultation in Berlin when the news of the day's events were published can easily be understood. It was too quickly assumed that the easy triumphs of 1870 were about to be repeated, but the practical result of this great victory was to rouse intense enthusiasm in the German ranks, and to confirm their confidence in their leaders. The retreat of the French was effected under the most difficult circumstances by nightfall on the 21st, when Castelnau's army had reached the heights on the left bank of the Seille, but a defensive position covering Nancy had been studied for many years, and had already been partially entrenched, which facilitated the marvellous rally of the French infantry after the defeat and hot pursuit to which they had been exposed.

NANCY

Elated by the unexpected extent of his victory, the Crown Prince of Bavaria now resolved to possess himself of Nancy, the capital of Lorraine, and hoped at the same time to pen the defeated French army within the fortress *rayon* of Toul, situated on the Moselle eighteen miles to the westward of Nancy. Between Nancy and Toul stretches the vast Forêt de la Haye, which was expected to be the first rallying point of the French army. The demarcation of the frontier in 1871 had doubtless with a purpose exposed Nancy to a sudden German attack. The town at the commencement of the war contained roughly 120,000 inhabitants ; it lies on the left bank of the River Meurthe, and is only 170 miles south-east of Paris. Not only is it the centre of a network of excellent roads leading right into the heart of France, but it is the junction of an important railway system. One line runs over the frontier direct to Strasburg, and actually communicates with the strategical railways built by the German Government on the banks of the Rhine. Another line goes to Metz and thence to Treves, while on the French side there are lines to Épinal and Belfort and a main line passing by Bar-le-Duc, Vitry, the great camp at Châlons and Château-Thierry to Paris. Both Bar-le-Duc and Château-Thierry are important junctions, the former leading direct to Sedan and the latter to Rheims, Laon, and through Amiens to the Channel. From the point of view of railway communications there is no need to enlarge on the importance which the Germans attached to the capture of the chief town of the department Meurthe-et-Moselle.

The town is a prosperous manufacturing centre. It contains a wealth of supplies of all kinds and could have been held to ransom for an enormous sum by the German organised brigandage. It will be remembered that the Kaiser himself felt success to be so vital that he lent his armies the inspiration of his own presence, and issued a famous order that Nancy must be taken at all costs and under his eye. It was not taken, though the cost to the Germans was enormous, and all that the Kaiser saw was some of his finest troops blotted out of existence. The ancient part of the town is noticeable for its narrow, irregular streets, but there is a modern part which has broad, open boulevards commanding a view of the surrounding hills. The handsome Place Stanislas divides the old town from the new, and contains many fine buildings, such as the Hôtel de Ville and the Bishop's Palace, while there is also the ancient cathedral and the church of the Cordeliers.

When the French were defeated and compelled to retreat from Morhange, their general had already selected the positions he would take up for the defence of the town. The French had a splendid line of natural positions to fall back upon, which only required a little preparation and determined courage to hold against an enemy attacking in superior numbers. The Germans, after the battle of Morhange, had swept onwards with great rapidity. They had captured Lunéville and at Dombasle were on the banks of the Meurthe. Their lines curved eastwards from Crevic to Erbewiller, then westward from there to Champenoux, and skirted the Forêt de Champenoux to Jeandelaincourt. These points were reached on August 22nd, and they were the limit of the German advance in Lorraine.

Mention has been made of the hills which surround Nancy and make it such a picturesque and attractive place of residence. They are known as the Couronné de Nancy, and rise to considerable height, are well wooded, and are noticeable for their abruptness and terraced character. Many of these terraces are actual plateaux, and one, known as the Plateau of Amance, was the height which checked and rendered fruitless the German advance. The enemy held the village of Champenoux and the forest of the same name at its foot, but his attempts to capture the hill itself cost him the lives of several thousands of good soldiers. In the meanwhile the total failure of their rash offensive movement had taught the French that they must change their tactics for the present and be content with wearing down the enemy, while they themselves lost as few men as possible.

General de Castelnau took up a line from south to north with his right flank resting lightly on the River Mortagne, which a little lower falls into the Meurthe. Curving by Drouville-Réméréville eastwards, the French compelled the bend in the German line already noticed. They held the forest of St. Paul and Languelotte strongly with the south-eastern slope and crest of Amance. The crest of Bouxières-aux-Chênes and the lower heights of the Montenoy, the neck and village of Bratte, the Col de Sivry, the height of Mont St. Jean and Mont Toulon to the north were also French. The latter was their extreme left and overlooked the German right at Jeandelaincourt. General Joffre had carefully surveyed the position with General de Castelnau and General Pau, and the trio of distinguished commanders recognised that here they had a natural fortress made to their hands, of enormous strength, against which the Germans were bound to batter themselves to pieces in vain.

In peace Nancy contained a garrison of two divisions; reinforcements were available from Toul, while the men of the army corps who had been driven back over the frontier after Morhange were so far from being demoralised that they took the prominent part in the month's fighting that followed and the subsequent advance. The French had also crowned the crests with their guns of 155 calibre, whose long range kept down the German heavy guns. The first

German attack on the position, it will be noted, corresponded with the attack on the Allied left and justified the official description of August 22nd as the day on which between the Moselle and Mons a general battle was in full progress.

All day, August 21st, the retreat of General de Castelnau's army was fiercely pressed by the German pursuit. While the Bavarian army pushed forward towards the River Seille and towards the high road from Château Salins to Saarburg, its left wing ascended the valley of the Saar, while the seventh German army, under General von Heeringen, marched on Lunéville, driving the French covering troops before them. There was hard fighting north of Lunéville, which did not fall into the hands of the Germans until the 23rd. The French troops successfully held their ground in the Vosges Mountains, and reoccupied Mulhouse in the plain of Alsace, driving the German detachment in that district northwards. While these events were occurring in Lorraine the military situation was developing on the Belgian frontier on both banks of the Meuse.

Battles of Longwy—Charleroi

The fifth German army, under the Crown Prince, had already invested the small fortress of Longwy, and was preparing to storm the passages of the Chiers when, in accordance with the general French plan, the third French army marched forward to meet it. The Crown Prince's line was prolonged on his right by the fourth German army under the Duke of Würtemberg on the right bank of the River Semois, which cuts a narrow valley through the Ardennes from Arlon to the Meuse just below Mézières. This country is densely wooded, and cut up by narrow ravines, but is intersected by a fairly good system of roads. Eleven metalled roads ran roughly in the direction of the German advance. The great battle which followed has been called Neufchâteau-Charleroi by the French, and Longwy-Charleroi by the Germans. Finding that their enemy had resolved to attack, the Germans deployed their columns to await the assault, which was furiously delivered on August 21st. The forest country did not favour the tactics of the German artillery in the same degree as the battlefield of Morhange, but the French infantry attacks were made with equal impetuosity. Driven home against infantry and machine-guns under cover, the rushes of the French regiments were repulsed with great loss, and as the day wore on the German armies developed their numerical superiority; so that overlapping columns began to press on the French right.

In the meanwhile no fewer than eight German army corps had ascended the valley of the Meuse, invested Namur, and forced the passage of the river between Dinant and the fortress. These troops belonged to the armies of General von Bülow and General von Hausen. Von Bülow's army encountered the fifth French army at Charleroi, with which it fought a desperate engagement on the evening of the 21st and forenoon of the 22nd, resulting in the collapse of the French resistance, the capture of the smoking ruins of the town of Charleroi, and all the passages over the Sambre down to its junction with the Meuse at Namur. Von Hausen's Saxon army constituted a mass of manœuvre which hurled itself upon the French left wing at Dinant. Thus on the front of over 100 miles from the Moselle to Charleroi four German armies contended with thirteen French army corps, and after a series of sanguinary struggles drove them through the forest, stormed the banks of the Semois, and captured the passages over the Meuse and Sambre. The defence of Namur collapsed under the fire of the German siege howitzers and the country between the Sambre and Meuse, known as Les Fagnes, lay open to the German advance.

If ever the French and German staff diaries and reports from the troops engaged in that fateful struggle on August 21st and 22nd are tabulated and collected, they will furnish the material for a military history of wonderful interest; but at that period of the war things were in too critical a stage, and the actors in the drama were too busy to have sufficient leisure for long reports. In France it was merely stated that the armies on the frontier had been checked, and in consequence of the outflanking movement by the Germans through Brussels, they were being withdrawn to the defensive line within the French frontier which they had only quitted at this stage of the conflict in order to carry succour to the King of the Belgians. It was conveyed to the French troops that the collapse of Belgian resistance and the late arrival of the British army rendered it imprudent to pursue the offensive. The idea was sedulously circulated that the rôle of the French army for the present was merely to detain as large German Forces as possible, and even to prolong their lines of communication by luring them on into France while the countless legions of the Tsar were pursuing their irresistible advance into the heart of Prussia. Actually the situation on Germany's eastern frontier lent some colour to the picture, for, much earlier than had been anticipated by the German General Staff, the Russians were beginning to make themselves felt in force at a number of points; but otherwise the official theory was widely at variance with what is known to have happened. The French authorities of course acted quite correctly in circulating any explanation at the time which was calculated to maintain the courage of their troops in the crisis of their fate, but it is the duty of the historian to point out the errors of the French strategy.

French Strategy

The decision to assume the offensive against the advancing and converging German armies was worthy of the traditions of the French Army, and gave good promise of success. It failed for reasons subsequently admitted by the French commanders themselves. They were ignorant of the power of the German artillery, and did not at that period of the war understand the tactics necessary to foil it. Many of the general officers had been appointed by political interest, who proved incompetent in the trying test of warfare under new conditions. Finally, the diversion of so many army corps to Alsace and Lorraine, when the focus of the situation unquestionably lay in the Ardennes, was a fatal error, nor were the French authorities altogether just to their British ally. They had disposed of the British Forces to suit their own strategy. These Forces had reached the theatre of war two or three days before the scheduled time, and the task assigned to them on the left of the French general line was not happily inspired. In its position at Mons the British army was not well situated for meeting an outflanking German attack, nor was it favourably situated in a contrary case, if the Allies outflanked the Germans, for delivering an effectual counter-stroke. This last task seems to have been reserved for the group of Territorial and reserve divisions tardily assembled on the British left under General d'Amade in the region of Lille, but these troops were late for the rendezvous, and were not even in condition to assist the British after the retreat from the frontier. One division at least was captured at Lille without being able to offer resistance, and the whole group was vastly inferior to the British Expeditionary Force for manœuvring and offensive purposes. In this part of the theatre of war also the intelligence system of the Allies was gravely defective. Nothing would have been easier than to have obtained from Belgian sources ample and early information of the march of German columns across Belgium. It would seem that what information did reach the French headquarters was conveyed by private enterprise, such as the military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in the Belgian capital.

The following are the accounts published officially by the French Government of the first great trial of strength between the two armies from the Vosges to the Sambre:

> "NANCY, *20th Aug.*, 1914, 7 *o'clock.*
>
> "In Upper Alsace we have continued to make progress. In the Vosges the Germans have retaken the village of Villé, where we had an advance guard. Our troops are crossing the Seille; they occupy Château Salins and Dieuze, but the progress is necessarily very slow in the teeth of field fortification solidly occupied. A cavalry encounter victorious for our arms occurred at Florentin in Belgium. Latest news: The French army has reached Morhange, having progressed rapidly in the afternoon beyond the Seille."

"NANCY, 20*th Aug.*, 1914, 11.50 *p.m.*

"Nothing new to announce in Alsace or Lorraine.

"In Belgium—to the east of the Meuse—the Germans have reached the line Dinant-Neufchâteau. Important Forces continue to pass the Meuse between Liége and Namur. Their advance guards have reached the Dyle. Before this movement the Belgian army had begun to retreat in the direction of Antwerp.

" The Pope died this morning at 1.35."

"NANCY, 21*st Aug.*, 1914.

" *In Alsace.*—Our troops have gained a brilliant success between Mulhouse and Altkirch. The Germans are retreating to the Rhine, and have left in our hands numerous prisoners and twenty-four guns.

" *In Lorraine.*—Yesterday was less fortunate than the preceding days for us. Our advance guards knocked up against very strong positions, and were driven back upon the main body by a counter-attack. Our army is solidly established on the Seille, and on the Marne and Rhine canal.

" *In Belgium.*—The German cavalry has occupied Brussels; important columns are moving in that direction. The Belgian army is moving on Antwerp without having been detained by the enemy."

"NANCY, 22*nd Aug.*, 7 *o'clock.*

" *Operations in Lorraine and Alsace.*—We have announced yesterday, according to brief dispatches, that our troops in Alsace had reoccupied Mulhouse, and that our troops in Lorraine have retired before superior Forces of the enemy. The following are the details of the two series of operations:

" *In Lorraine.*—Our troops are retiring. After having recaptured the frontier, as already stated, our troops advanced into Lorraine on the front Donon-Château Salins. They had thrown back German troops in the valley of the Seille and the region des Etangs, and our advance guards had reached Delmé, Dieuze, and Morhange. During yesterday several German army corps had made a vigorous counter-attack along the whole front. Our advance-guards had to retire on the main body, and the fighting on both sides became very sharp by reason of the numerical superiority of the enemy. Our troops, who had been fighting continuously for six days without rest, have been withdrawn. Our left covers the advance works of Nancy, and our right is solidly established on the Donon ridge. The strength of the hostile forces engaged would not have permitted us to remain in Lorraine with prudence.

" *In Belgium.*—The Belgian army continues to retreat. Forces of German cavalry have traversed Brussels, marching westward, and followed by an army corps. A war contribution of eight million sterling has been imposed on the town. Namur is partially invested; a fire of heavy artillery was opened about midday. The westward movement of German columns continues on both banks of the Meuse outside the rayon of Namur."

"PARIS, 23*rd Aug.*, 1914, 7 *o'clock.*

" *In Lorraine.*—The German offensive which followed our attack and continued yesterday has been arrested. There has been no German attack against the position known as the Grand Couronné de Nancy. There have been engagements on the heights north of Lunéville. The German attack in these actions gave the impression of a certain slackness. It is certain that if our losses during the last three days have been heavy, so have been those of the Germans."

"NANCY, 24*th Aug.*, 1914, 11.40.

" The great battle between the main body of the Anglo-French Forces and the main body of the German Forces continues. We have the important mission of occupying almost the whole of the enemy's armies. In the meanwhile our Allies in the east are obtaining important successes.

"In East Prussia they have continued their forward

> movement and occupied the front Tilsit-Insterburg-Arys, forty-five miles from the frontier."

The following telegram laconically describes the series of battles in the Ardennes :

> " One of our armies, starting from Verdun and aiming at Neufchâteau in Belgium, is attacking the German Forces which are moving westward in Luxemburg on the right bank of the Semois. Another French army, starting from the region of Sedan, is attacking the German corps on the march between the Rivers Lesse and Meuse. A third army, from the region of Chimay, is attacking the German right between the Sambre and Meuse, and is supported by the English army moving from Mons. The march of the Germans who were endeavouring to outflank our left wing has been followed step by step, and their right is now being attacked by the army of our left wing, in close co-operation with the English army. On that side there has been fighting for more than one day. On all the rest of the front also there has been desperate fighting, and already serious losses have been sustained on both sides. On our extreme left an army group has been constituted in the north to deal with any eventuality in that direction.
>
> "To the west of the Meuse our troops have advanced across a very difficult country. They were vigorously attacked in deploying from the woods, and were obliged to retreat after very severe fighting to the south of the River Semois. By order of General Joffre our troops and the English troops have taken post in the covering positions which they would not have quitted if the admirable efforts of the Belgians had not enabled us to enter Belgium. Our armies are intact. Our cavalry has not suffered, our artillery has proved its superiority ; officers and soldiers continue to be in the best physical and moral condition. In consequence of the orders given, the struggle will change its character during the next few days. The French army will remain for a time

> on the defensive, but at a given moment selected by the Commander-in-Chief it will resume a vigorous offensive. Our losses have been heavy, and it would be premature to enumerate them. The same applies to the losses of the German army, which has been compelled to sustain its counter-attacks in order once more to take up defensive positions."

The early dispatches from Nancy and the official bulletins of the French Government were eagerly devoured and believed by the French people. Although the might of the German army was not underrated, it was thought that the forces they had been compelled to leave behind on the Russian frontier had reduced their numbers to an equality with the French, and the assistance of the British and Belgians was expected to give the Allies a certain superiority. When, therefore, it was announced that a large tract in Alsace had been overrun by the French, that the crests of the Vosges were in their hands, and that the mass of their armies was taking the offensive in Lorraine and the Ardennes, high hopes were raised of signal and decisive success. These anticipations were sustained by Castelnau's bold advance towards the Saar, and for some days after his disastrous repulse at Morhange the truth was concealed by the representations of the Government. A great stream of wounded, brought back into France from all quarters of the theatre of war, filled up the hospitals and Red Cross buildings, and attested the gravity of the struggle, but these heavy losses were staunchly accepted as the price which had to be paid. But gradually the news got about of the shattering of the 15th Army Corps at Morhange, and the retreat to the frontier. With the dislocation of units large numbers of soldiers lost their regiments and straggled through the woods back into France. Many of these men spread alarmist reports, so that a feeling of great uneasiness concerning the general situation began to prevail, and was not allayed by the official *communiqués*.

In Paris and in the other great cities of France the Government had taken the most stringent precautions to prevent and deal with any insubordination or disloyalty on the part of the civil population, for the terrible recollection of the national indiscipline in the war of 1870, and the powerful assistance it lent to the enemy, had been taken to heart. Any disloyal movement would instantly have been crushed with great severity. The restaurants were closed early, the sale of drink was restricted, and the regulation against the assembly of any crowds in public places was enforced with ludicrous exactness by the police. If an individual stood still for a minute to look round in the streets within sight of a policeman, he was instantly and peremptorily ordered to move on. The bearing of the populace, however, was all that could have been desired, and in spite of the evident anxiety which prevailed both as to the fate of friends and relations, and also as to the result of the struggle, the French people remained outwardly calm and self-restrained. France was never seen to better advantage than in those critical August days when the fortune of war seemed once again to be deserting her standards.

The chiefs of the French Army had for many years submitted to the political measures of their civilian colleagues, although they well understood the peril in which France stood from her eastern neighbour, and the inadequacy of the measures taken by successive French Governments to meet the catastrophe which they clearly foresaw. But if they had been docile in peace, the senior generals of the French Army had agreed to stand by one another and by their Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre, in the event of war. There is no reason to suspect that any group of French politicians meditated disloyalty in the face of the enemy, but had any movement been set on foot to weaken the executive or to hinder in the slightest degree either the mobilisation of the Army or its subsequent movements, it would have been ruthlessly dealt with, and this fact was very well understood.

Throughout France the ordinary life of the nation was suspended. Almost all its activities were focussed on the one great object of assisting the armies in the field by every possible means. The organisation of second and third line troops was being completed; the industry of the country, even at this early date, was systematically prepared to supply the needs of the Army for a long and doubtful war, and in particular the *personnel* of the railway companies worked and overworked with an indefatigable zeal which excited the wonder and admiration of all who saw it. At the very moment when vast quantities of men and horses and huge quantities of stores were being conveyed by rail through Paris to the seat of war from all parts of France, the French railways had to deal with two other great streams of traffic, and they did so with marvellous success. From the Swiss and Italian frontiers a vast throng of British, Americans, and other foreigners were traversing France *en route* to their own countries. At the same time the war naturally caused vast numbers of French people, especially of the upper classes, to travel both to and from Paris from all points of the compass. Private motor-cars had been requisitioned for military use on a great scale, nor was it easy either to obtain petrol or permission to drive about France, so that large numbers of people who were accustomed to travel by motor-car suddenly had recourse to the railways. Yet throughout the vast regions affected by these movements of the population there was no serious hitch or breakdown on the French railways, nor was the lightest part of their task the transport and supply of the British army, whose line of communication ran at right-angles to their own, and right athwart part of it, from the ports of Northern France. The fact, too, that nearly half the French Army faced eastward, while the other half faced northward, and the lines of communication of these two great hosts crossed the country east of Paris, added to the difficulties of the French railway staff. Not only were all these difficulties successfully solved, but the French supreme Command was able to make use of the *réseau de l'Est* (the eastern railway system) to manœuvre their troops and reinforce their line of battle on a scale which was not even rivalled by the vaunted German railway system. Startling as were the results of the new machinery brought into military use in this war for the first time, such as motor transport, aircraft, and wireless telegraphy, yet not even these innovations have played a more important part than the mighty development of the railway system and the facilities it has afforded for effecting strategical and tactical surprises.

The results of the battles on the frontier were communicated to the German public in bulletins almost as laconic as the French. Naturally the most was made of these early successes, and in particular the operations of the Crown Prince of Germany's army were compared with the triumphant march of the German troops on the same terrain in 1870. The blind confidence of the German troops in their leaders of all ranks was confirmed, and the whole nation hardened its heart and stiffened its neck for a heroic struggle against the mighty coalition of its foes.

CHAPTER VI

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

DURING the first three weeks of the war a very strict censorship was maintained in London over all news which affected the general situation. Our Government undoubtedly feared that there would be a popular outcry against the dispatch out of the United Kingdom of the small regular force of trained troops and the deputing to the Territorial army of the duty of safeguarding the United Kingdom. If this fear had been well grounded the stream of favourable news announcing French victories in Alsace and Belgian victories on the Meuse would have served good purpose, but probably the precaution was not needed, for the British public is modestly aware of its ignorance of all military affairs, and has never yet sought to dictate any particular strategy to its rulers. Although it was generally known that the destination of the Expeditionary Force was the Continental seat of war, yet no uneasiness found public expression, in fact the real danger lay in the other direction. The British people were far from realising at this early stage what the war meant to them, and it was not until events seemed to be taking an unfavourable turn that the War Office was able to count on the popular support which it needed. Directly war was declared measures which had long been in preparation were taken to assemble adequate transports in the most convenient ports for the dispatch of our army to France.

British staff officers forthwith proceeded to the stations on the line of communication which was assigned to us by the French. Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, and Havre were the ports selected for the disembarkation of our troops, and at Amiens a great advance base was established where

British stores of supply and ammunition were collected in vast quantities. Folkestone, Bristol, Newhaven, Southampton, Dublin, and Cork were the ports of embarkation, and the greater part of the regiments constituting the expedition were landed at Boulogne.

The process of mobilising even four divisions of British troops is attended with peculiar difficulty because the reservists do not necessarily live anywhere near the places where they are armed and clothed. For example, a reservist living in London might have to join his depot in Belfast ; and then, having received his arms and equipment, he might have to be sent with the other reservists in his battalion possibly to Aldershot or Colchester. In spite of the delays inseparable from a non-territorial military system, the reserves responded to the summons, and within a week were incorporated in their regiments. A still more serious blot on the system of the War Office as it existed when the war broke out was due to the double rôle imposed upon the infantry of our Home Army. Since these regiments had as their principal task the duty of training drafts for regiments abroad, they were annually being skimmed of their best men. The men actually serving with the colours were for the most part under age, so that to put the battalions on a war footing a demand amounting in some instances to 50 per cent. of their total strength had to be made upon the reserves. Nor only were the reserves thus dangerously depleted, and the first-line regiments, largely composed of men suddenly withdrawn from civil life, out of condition for marching and out of touch with recent methods of training, but also these men found themselves in strange surroundings, under the command of officers and non-commissioned officers with whom they had no personal acquaintance, because the greater part of their colour service, and, in the great majority of cases, the last part, had been done with the linked regiment abroad. It is necessary to record and remember these facts in order justly to estimate the valour, tenacity, and self-sacrifice of these regiments when suddenly plunged, for the first time within a century, in a life-and-death struggle against a superior number of the best troops on the Continent.

A strong division of cavalry, composed of four brigades, each of nine squadrons, together with six divisions of infantry, each composed of three brigades, each of four one-battalion regiments, were allotted to the Expeditionary Force. The cavalry division was mobilised by a severe requisition of the horses belonging to private owners. The horses were quickly collected, but the system was costly and unsatisfactory, because many valuable horses were seized, including mares, as well as a large number hardly good enough for the purpose, and owing to lack of proper organisation the owners of the good horses were insufficiently remunerated, while the owners of the bad ones received a great deal too much, so that much public money was wasted, the horse supply of the nation was depleted, and there was a great waste of fighting force. Of the six infantry divisions, only four were ready to start at once. A fifth followed a week later, and the sixth not until some time later. The army was organised in three army corps, and the absence of one-third of its strength from the first battlefield proved very unfortunate, though the reluctance of the Government to send all its trained troops out of the country, with the German Fleet still undefeated, is easily to be understood.

Field-Marshal Sir John French was appointed to the command of the Forces in the field. Sir Douglas Haig and Sir J. Grierson were the army corps commanders. General E. Allenby commanded the cavalry division, and Sir Archibald Murray held the all-important post of Chief of the Staff. The British Commander-in-Chief had had a very remarkable military career. Born on September 28th, 1852, he joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman, but preferring the land forces, he left the service and was educated for the Army. He served in the 19th Hussars from the rank of cornet to colonel, took part in several Egyptian expeditions, and distinguished himself in command of the 19th Hussars in India by its superior internal organisation and by tactical training, for, previous to the Boer War, great attention was paid in the British Army to parade work and outward show, whereas war-training was almost entirely neglected. When his regimental command had expired Sir John served in the

War Office, commanded the cavalry brigade at Aldershot, and distinguished himself in charge of the Duke of Connaught's cavalry in the manœuvres of 1898. In spite of much opposition in high quarters, Sir Redvers Buller insisted on conferring upon him the chief cavalry command in South Africa over the heads of the senior cavalry generals, a selection which proved to be very important in the fate of the campaign.

French was in command of the cavalry division which fought at Ladysmith, and which was retained in the garrison by Sir George White after the Boer victory on Mournful Monday, although fortunately he sent out the cavalry general, with Colonel Haig, his chief staff officer, by the last train which left the place before the Boer investment was complete. French's next command was the division of cavalry assembled in the neighbourhood of Colesberg, which contained the burghers of the Free State, and overawed the disaffected Dutch of Cape Colony in the interval between the disastrous opening of the campaign and the arrival from England of a fresh army corps in January. This army corps, under the command of Lord Roberts, with Lord Kitchener as Chief of the Staff, having disembarked at Cape Town, was conveyed four hundred miles by rail to the banks of the Orange River in order to relieve Kimberley before assuming the offensive against the Boer Republics. The cavalry commander multiplied his activity while this delicate operation was in course of execution, and then, leaving an aggressive line of outposts in position to check the Boer troops round Colesberg, he marched rapidly and stealthily to the rendezvous on the Modder River.

Lord Roberts hoped to defeat the Boers without bloodshed. He sent the cavalry division round the left flank of the Boer army entrenched at Magersfontein to relieve Kimberley, and trusted that when the Boers found themselves between two fires they would abandon their lines. French started on his expedition, but soon found his route barred by the enemy's riflemen in position on a long low ridge with a flat plain in front of it two miles wide. The success of the insurgents in a number of skirmishes wherein they had been very unskilfully attacked had established a theory in the British camp and at the British Headquarters that any attack against the enemy's front was doomed to fail under the destructive effect of his rifle fire. French had the nerve to disregard the timid counsels which prevailed. He formed his troops in three lines, sounded the gallop, charged the Boer position, and scattered its defenders to the winds. This was the first important tactical success won by the British troops in South Africa, and its moral effect was tremendous. The Boers never again attempted to withstand a cavalry charge. As a rule they took very good care to post their commandoes on inaccessible kopjes where horsemen could not gallop over them.

The relief of Kimberley was accomplished by a forced march which was very costly in the lives of horses, and then Cronje, the Boer general, began to realise the odds with which he had to contend. They were, in fact, overwhelming; for Roberts's army included thirty-two battalions of infantry, several thousand mounted infantry, and more than a hundred guns, while, including de Wet's detachment, the Boers mustered only about eleven thousand riflemen with a score of guns. Very reluctantly Cronje resolved to retreat towards Bloemfontein. He carried with him all his wagons. This decision proved his undoing in spite of the facilities given for his evasion by the British Commander-in-Chief. Disregarding the extreme exhaustion of his horses and men owing to the waterless nature of the country in which he had been operating, French no sooner learnt of Cronje's retreat than he assembled every horse that could walk and started in pursuit. He was able to reach the Modder River at Paardeburg Drift with the head of his column just before Cronje reached the same spot with the leading wagons of his great caravan. In the meanwhile Lord Roberts had been obliged to hand his command over to Lord Kitchener temporarily, owing to indisposition, and that energetic leader, having realised the situation, promptly joined in the pursuit with all the infantry within reach, and then acquainted the Commander-in-Chief of the decisive step he had taken, and claimed his support.

French succeeded in bluffing the Boers, who could easily have swept his opposition aside, into forming a laager and taking refuge in the river-bed. For twenty-four critical hours the British infantry toiled in pursuit across the thirsty veldt, while French's horse-artillery guns fired an occasional salvo in the night as a signal that the quarry had not yet escaped. At dawn of day the Boers were still in laager, French's cavalry still interposed between them and Bloemfontein, another cavalry brigade was coming up to help him from Kimberley, and four infantry brigades were preparing to deploy for action on the opposite bank of the stream. The battle that followed settled the fate of Cronje's army, and turned the tide of war against the Boer Republics.

During the remainder of the war French commanded both the cavalry and mixed forces in the weary and desultory operations involved in hunting down the Boer commandoes with marked success, and at its conclusion he had established the reputation of being the most skilful, the most resolute, and the most resourceful of the British generals in the field. He succeeded Sir Redvers Buller in the Aldershot command at the expiration of which he became Inspector-General of the Forces. During his tenure of the highest military command the Home Army remodelled its tactical instruction with the object of fitting it for European warfare. Sir John French is essentially a cavalry commander, and probably the cavalry under the commanders produced by the Boer War surpassed the other arms; our cavalry superiority stood us in good stead in the retreat from the Belgian frontier. Under French's command infantry and artillery too made very important progress, so that the Forces which took the field in Northern France in August 1914 were infinitely more formidable than the same regiments in South Africa.

In the spring of 1914 the political intrigues which affected the War Office in connection with the Liberal scheme of Home Rule for Ireland compelled Sir John French to resign his appointment. He was retained, however, as the commander-designate of the Expeditionary Force, and was actually preparing to preside at the army manœuvres in September when war broke out. His leadership of the army in Northern France has made good on a far greater scale the promise which he gave in South Africa. Like all British generals of his date, he suffers for the contempt in which the intellectual side of war was held in his youth, and depends more than some commanders-in-chief on a Chief of the Staff to make good this defect, but he has proved himself to tower head and shoulders above any British leader in the field since the victorious career of Sir Charles Napier.

Sir Archibald Murray, Chief of the Staff, was an infantry officer of diligence and ability, who had served on the staff of Sir John French, and had been successful in the somewhat limited theatre hitherto provided for our Army, but had had no previous experience of handling troops on a great scale in peace or war. Sir Douglas Haig, the commander of the First Army Corps, was in the 7th Hussars and 17th Lancers ; he had won a great reputation as French's chief staff officer in South Africa, and as a column commander in the guerilla stage of the war. A profound student of European warfare, he was the author of a book on cavalry tactics. He had been Inspector-General of Cavalry in India, and was in command at Aldershot, where were quartered the troops composing his army corps, when war was declared.

Sir J. Grierson, appointed commander of the Second Army Corps, had been for many years British military attaché to the Embassy at Berlin, and as such had been honoured by the Kaiser's personal acquaintance. He was well acquainted with the German military system, but unfortunately died on the journey to France.

Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien joined the 45th Foot as an ensign in 1876, and attained the rank of Lieut.-Colonel in 1899. He had the luck to see active service at the beginning of his career in Zululand. He also took part in Wolseley's short Egyptian campaign in 1882, and was appointed to the Egyptian Army in 1884. He saw active service in the Sudan in 1885 and 1886 ; in 1893 he joined the staff in India as D.A.A.G., and in 1894 was promoted to be A.A.G. till 1886. He served in the Chitral campaign of 1895 and the Tirah campaign of 1897, and in 1898 was once again on the banks of the Nile with Kitchener's victorious expedition to Khartoum. In the South African War he commanded a brigade at the battle of Paardeburg, and was shortly afterwards promoted to be a Major-General commanding a division. From 1901 to 1903 he was Adjutant-General of the Army in India. From 1903 to 1907 he commanded the Quetta division, and from 1907 to 1912 he held the Aldershot command. In 1912 he was transferred to the southern command headquarters, Salisbury Plain, where the outbreak of the war with Germany found him. Of all the generals of the British Army, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien has had the greatest experience of actual warfare, and has often displayed military talent of a high order.

Sir Edmund Allenby, the cavalry commander, had served in the Inniskilling Dragoons, and had commanded the 5th Lancers. He, too, had seized the opportunity of the South African War to give proof of his military talent. As Inspector of Cavalry for four years, he had been largely instrumental in the resurrection of British cavalry superiority, and enjoyed the rare good fortune for a British general of leading in the field the troops with whose training he had been personally connected, and the subordinate leaders whom he thoroughly knew. The officer who was responsible for the intricate operation of supplying and transporting the army in a foreign country and over foreign railways was the Quartermaster-General, Sir William Robertson, and it was the uncommon ability this officer brought to bear on his difficult task which enabled our Forces to rally so promptly for a great offensive counterstroke when the Germans retreated to the Marne. Sir William Robertson has had the most remarkable military career of modern times. He entered the Army as a trooper in the 16th Lancers, served as a sergeant, and was promoted to a commission in the 3rd Dragoon Guards. A very remarkable linguist, he served on the Headquarter Staff of the Indian Army, took part in various frontier expeditions and in the South African War. In 1910 he was appointed Chief of the Staff College, and as such was responsible for the training of future staff officers. When war broke out he was commanding a division at Aldershot.

During the week July 26th to August 2nd the British

Government, in the hope of preserving peace, had left all the European Powers in doubt as to the course it meant to pursue. The first direct appeal from the French Government for British support was evasively answered, and when the French returned a defiant reply to the German ultimatum, the keenest anxiety prevailed throughout France as to whether England " would march." The relief was correspondingly great when the violation of Belgian neutrality decided the British Cabinet to interfere, but even then it was not known whether the British army would appear in line with the French. The military preparations in England were kept secret so well that the appearance of a vast fleet of transports in the French harbours, smoothly and rapidly disembarking regiment after regiment of khaki troops, came as a joyful surprise to the population and caused the most intense enthusiasm wherever they marched. The mass of the people were not aware of the small numbers of the British army ; but the moral support and confidence which its arrival afforded to France in the crisis of her fate was of even greater value than its material assistance.

The French plan of campaign, as modified to meet the German eruption through Belgium, and its extension west of the River Sambre, contemplated the formation of a left wing consisting of three or four French army corps on the Sambre, with the British army and another group of French reserve divisions on its left, in touch with the Belgian field forces who were now operating west of Brussels. The principal flaw in the conception of the scheme was the mixed, and therefore weak, character of this left wing, which, as might have easily been foreseen, had to bear the brunt of a tremendous German attack. Then a miscalculation was made in point of time. Although the Germans had much farther to travel than their adversaries, they reached the battlefield first, and the several groups of Allied troops were not complete or in position when the storm burst. The group of French reserve divisions on the British left were not ready to take any part in the first struggle, while the Belgian field army had been absorbed in the garrison of Antwerp instead of keeping the open field on the Allied left, which it should have done if the defence of the kingdom had been properly organised and an adequate garrison for Antwerp, consisting of second-line troops, had been available.

On August 15th Sir John French arrived in Paris, and proceeded to the British Embassy, where he remained till Monday morning in close consultation with the French General Staff. Throughout the following week British troops were assembling at Amiens, and along the railway through Lille and Arras to the right bank of the Scheldt. The country between Maubeuge and Mons was assigned to Sir John French as his point of concentration, and he proceeded to take up a defensive position. Maubeuge was formerly a fortress of considerable strength, but had been partially dismantled; nevertheless its works formed a solid pivot round which to manœuvre in case the British army had to fall back. Between Maubeuge and the left of the French army on the Sambre there was a ten-mile gap, which was imperfectly stopped by one brigade of British cavalry at Binche. Haig's army corps, the First, was detailed to form the right of our line east of Mons, and Smith-Dorrien's Second Army Corps prolonged the line through Mons and along the canal from Mons to Condé. Our left should have been guarded by two divisions of French cavalry, and the French reserve divisions, which were forming at Lille, but these forces had not come into line when the German attack was delivered on Sunday the 23rd. Charleroi finally fell into the hands of the Germans on Saturday afternoon the 22nd, when the French army of the Sambre retreated through the forest towards Mariembourg and Chimay. The situation, therefore, at dawn on the 23rd was that the two British army corps still stood in position. forming a salient towards the German advance. All Sunday morning this advance was being carried out by the columns of General von Kluck's First German army along the great roads leading south through Nivelle, Soignies, Enghien, and Ath. General von Bülow's Second army had been severely engaged at Charleroi, but, having thrown back the French opposed to them, was reorganising its units, and was preparing to combine with von Kluck by marching against the British right. The attack of the Second army was doubtless delayed too, so as to enable the First army, on its right, to bring its power to bear, and also in the hope that Sir John French would commit the mistake of taking refuge within the fortress of Maubeuge. The British commander had selected and reconnoitred a position at Bavay, some ten miles south of Mons, where his right would be protected by Maubeuge, but whence he could still continue the retreat in the direction of St. Quentin, should he desire to do so.

The following is a section of Sir John French's dispatch in which he describes the situation of Sunday, August 23rd:

> "At 6 a.m. on August 23rd I assembled the commanders of the First and Second Corps and cavalry division at a point close to our position, and explained the general situation of the Allies, and what I understood to be General Joffre's plan. I discussed with them at some length the immediate situation in front of us.
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> "From information I received from the French headquarters, I understood that little more than one or at most two of the enemy's army corps, with perhaps one cavalry division, were in front of our position; and I was aware of no attempted outflanking movement by the enemy. I was confirmed in this opinion by the fact that my patrols encountered no undue opposition in their reconnoitring operations. The observations of my aeroplanes seemed also to bear out this estimate.
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> "About 3 p.m. on Sunday, the 23rd, reports began coming in to the effect that the enemy was commencing an attack on the Mons line, apparently in some strength, but that the right of the position from Mons and Bray was being particularly threatened.
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> "The commander of the First Corps had pushed his flank back to some high ground south of Bray, and the 5th Cavalry Brigade evacuated Binche, moving slightly south; the enemy thereupon occupied Binche.
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> "The right of the 3rd Division, under General Hamilton, was at Mons, which formed a somewhat dangerous salient; and I directed the commander of the Second

> Corps to be careful not to keep the troops on this salient too long, but, if threatened seriously, to draw back the centre behind Mons. This was done before dark. In the meantime, about 5 p.m., I received a most unexpected message from General Joffre by telegraph, telling me that at least three German corps, viz. a reserve corps, the Fourth Corps, and the Ninth Corps, were moving on my position in front, and that the Second Corps was engaged in a turning movement from the direction of Tournai. He also informed me that two reserve French divisions and the Fifth French army on my right were retiring, the Germans having on the previous day gained possession of the passages of the Sambre between Charleroi and Namur."

A private soldier of the Queen's West Kent Regiment has given a vivid description of what he saw of the battle of Mons:

> "It was Sunday, August 23rd, that we were at Mons, billeted in a farmyard, and we were having a sing-song and watching people home from church. The Belgian ladies were very kind-hearted, and we were given their prayer-books as souvenirs, and they also went to the shops and bought us cigarettes, which were most acceptable to the troops. At about 12.30 an orderly had gone down to draw dinners, when an aeroplane appeared overhead, throwing out some black powder. After this shrapnel burst overhead, acquainting us of the fact that the Germans were in the vicinity. All was uproar and confusion for the moment, because we were not armed, and our shirts and socks were out to wash, that being the only chance we had to get them washed. It did not take us long, however, to get in fighting trim, and to go through the town to the scene of operations, which was on the other side of a small canal that adjoined Mons. Here we found the A Company of the Royal West Kents engaged in a hard tussle keeping off the enemy until support arrived. The A Company had been engaged in outpost duty, so that they were the first to meet the

enemy. Their casualties were very heavy, and they lost all their officers except Lieut. Bell, who showed great valour in going out to bring in the wounded. Most of the damage was done by the shells, although at times the enemy were within 300 yards of our troops. We arrived in the nick of time, and took up position in a glass-blowing factory. We loopholed the walls and held that position until darkness set in. With darkness upon us we fixed bayonets, and lay in wait in case the enemy made an attempt to rush us.

"About 11 p.m. we received orders to retire over the canal. Two sections of C Company were left to keep the enemy in check, whilst the remainder of the battalion retired. After all had crossed the bridge was blown up, so that we were likely to be left in peace until the Germans could find a means of crossing the river. The two sections of C Company that had been left behind, unfortunately, were unable to retire over the bridge before it was blown up, and they had to find their own ways and means of getting across. Most of them managed to do so. We retired from the town of Mons, and got into open country, but we still kept on moving throughout the night. When daylight arrived we saw that Mons had been practically demolished, and that the Germans were also firing at times at the hospital. Throughout the morning we continued to fight a rear-guard action. We did not leave off trekking until 6 in the evening, when we found ourselves well out of the range of the German artillery in a valley surrounded by large hills. Here all the troops were glad to lie down and get something to eat, as we had been without food since the previous morning.

"Hungry soldiers were thankful to go into the swede and turnip fields, and make a meal of these roots as though they were apples. We found the French and Belgian people very kind to us on the line of march. They would stand at the wayside and give us fruit, and they had large tubs of water ready, and this the troops very much appreciated."

Battle of Mons

The information which Sir John French received at 5.30 on Sunday afternoon was not, however, the only warning which reached the British headquarters of the great German turning movement. Our aeroplanes had been actively at work over the Belgian plain, and had reported the march of great columns of infantry and guns, though these reports seemed to lack precision respecting the direction and scope of the German movement. More certain indications, however, were forthcoming. One by one the telephone offices in the Belgian villages recorded the approach of hostile troops, and one by one suddenly became silent. Sharp skirmishes, too, had taken place between our horsemen, who met with an ever-increasing resistance, and the enemy's advance guards. No doubt the British staff had not yet settled down to its work, and had failed to organise the prompt communication of important reports to headquarters. It is otherwise quite incomprehensible that the march of the Germans across the open plain on our front was not appreciated by the Army Staff. Still more astonishing was the lack of touch between British headquarters at Bavay and the French army which was defeated at Charleroi twenty-four hours previously. A motor-cyclist could easily have reached the British headquarters from the French in three hours or less, and the supreme importance of maintaining this touch, technically called *liaison*, was evidently not appreciated. The very fact that there is no English translation exactly denoting the word *liaison* is remarkable.

Gradually the pressure became more intense upon our advanced cavalry. The 5th Cavalry Brigade on our right at Binche was first compelled to withdraw, and the whole of the First Army Corps during Sunday afternoon had to fall back to the village of Bray, south-east of Mons, so as not to be intercepted or turned by the advance of the victorious German Second army in the valley of the Sambre. Our line of infantry outposts covering Mons had rapidly entrenched itself with the batteries of the Second Army Corps in position behind them. The first warning of danger was received by the enterprises of hostile aeroplanes, which circled above these trenches, and dropped smoke-balls to indicate their position. Then distant artillery began to send showers of shrapnel, which quickly compelled our regiments to man their lines and clear for action.

The country north of Mons is intersected by some woods and numerous orchards, so that the view is considerably obstructed. Gradually the German skirmishers penetrated through all the available cover and approached in groups wherever they could obtain a footing with the intention of rushing our lines. About the same time that Sir John French received his warning from the French army of the Sambre, the German fire, both of infantry and artillery, had become very intense, and before dark several premature attempts were made by the enemy's troops to break through with a rush. All these attempts were defeated by a steady and accurate fire from our infantry, exposed for the first time to the crucial ordeal of a European battlefield. When the light failed, the Second Corps still maintained its ground right along the front. It had repulsed several sharp attacks, and its artillery, in spite of the enemy's numerical superiority, had held its own.

Firing did not entirely cease after dark. A comparative lull supervened for a few hours. In the meanwhile the British headquarters had had time to review the situation, and realised the danger to which our troops were exposed in the salient at Mons. Sir John French's view of the situation is put forward in the following extract from his dispatch, which described his reasons for retiring to the line Bavay-Maubeuge :

> " In view of the possibility of my being driven from the Mons position, I had previously ordered a position in the rear to be reconnoitred. This position rested on the fortress of Maubeuge on the right, and extended west to Jenlain, south-east of Valenciennes, on the left. The position was reported difficult to hold, because standing crops and buildings made the sighting of trenches very difficult and limited the field of fire in

many important localities. It nevertheless afforded a few good artillery positions.

" When the news of the retirement of the French and the heavy German threatening on my front reached me, I endeavoured to confirm it by aeroplane reconnaissance ; and as a result of this I determined to effect a retirement to the Maubeuge position at daybreak on the 24th.

" A certain amount of fighting continued along the whole line throughout the night, and at daybreak on the 24th the 2nd Division, from the neighbourhood of Harmignies, made a powerful demonstration as if to retake Binche. This was supported by the artillery of both the 1st and 2nd Divisions, whilst the 1st Division took up a supporting position in the neighbourhood of Peissant. Under cover of this demonstration the Second Corps retired on the line Dour-Quarouble-Frameries. The 3rd Division, on the right of the corps, suffered considerable loss in this operation from the enemy, who had retaken Mons.

" The Second Corps halted on this line, where they partially entrenched themselves, enabling Sir Douglas Haig with the First Corps gradually to withdraw to the new position ; and he effected this without much further loss, reaching the line Bavay-Maubeuge about 7 p.m. Towards midday the enemy appeared to be directing his principal effort against our left.

" I had previously ordered General Allenby with the cavalry to act vigorously in advance of my left front and endeavour to take the pressure off.

" About 7.30 a.m. General Allenby received a message from Sir Charles Fergusson, commanding 5th Division, saying that he was very hard pressed and in urgent need of support. On receipt of this message General Allenby drew in the cavalry and endeavoured to bring direct support to the 5th Division.

" During the course of this operation General de Lisle, of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, thought he saw a good opportunity to paralyse the further advance of the

> enemy's infantry by making a mounted attack on his flank. He formed up and advanced for this purpose, but was held up by wire about 500 yards from his objective, and the 9th Lancers and 4th Dragoon Guards suffered severely in the retirement of the brigade.
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> "The 19th Infantry Brigade, which had been guarding the line of communications, was brought up by rail to Valenciennes on the 22nd and 23rd. On the morning of the 24th they were moved out to a position south of Quarouble to support the left flank of the Second Corps.
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> "With the assistance of the cavalry Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was enabled to effect his retreat to a new position; although, having two corps of the enemy on his front and one threatening his flank, he suffered great losses in doing so.
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> "At nightfall the position was occupied by the Second Corps to the west of Bavay, the First Corps to the right. The right was protected by the fortress of Maubeuge, the left by the 19th Brigade in position between Jenlain and Bry, and the cavalry on the outer flank."

In spite of the enemy's heavy artillery fire, the losses sustained by the British in Sunday's battle had been comparatively slight owing to the skill with which they had utilised natural cover. The heaps of shale in the mining villages and on the banks of the light railways had afforded excellent protection against the stream of missiles directed against us, and the ill-success of the enemy's charges had filled our men with confidence. They lay down to rest with the conviction that they had won a victory, and in the hope that the French armies were striking successful offensive blows elsewhere. Great was therefore their astonishment and disappointment to be roused in the night with orders for a stealthy retirement. There was no time to collect and remove the greater part of the wounded, who, in this action as well as in the other rearguard actions of the retreat, had to be left to the care of the enemy, a circumstance which swelled the numbers of the missing. For the most part contact with the enemy was successfully broken, though here and there small detachments lost their way and were taken prisoners.

When day dawned the 2nd Division of Haig's corps were marching on Maubeuge. All the artillery of the First Corps had come into action to cover the retreat, while the 1st Division on the extreme right initiated an advance towards Binche to head off the pursuit. As soon as the feint had produced its result the 1st Division too broke off the combat, and acting as a rearguard continued to cover the retirement of the army corps as far as Maubeuge. Before it was light the Second Corps also had retreated to a line of mining villages from Frameries south of Mons through Dour to Quarouble. The position was fairly strong, but its extent was excessive for the 20,000 rifles and 144 guns available for its defence. Each of the two divisions guarded about six miles of front, and the only reserve available was Allenby's cavalry. The reinforcements referred to in Sir John French's dispatch, the 19th Brigade, brought forward by rail from the lines of communication, had however reached the battlefield, and guarded our extreme left in co-operation with the cavalry.

By 7 o'clock on Monday morning von Kluck's troops developed a dangerous attack on the Second Corps. One hostile column occupied Condé and threatened to turn our extreme left, another pressed through Mons and attacked the 5th Division south of that place; at the same time the 3rd Division was assailed by a whole German army corps, which forced its way over the Condé-Mons canal and engaged the 3rd Division along its entire front. According to the programme, the continued retirement of the Second Corps should have followed the first, but the pressure of the enemy's infantry, covered by an intense artillery fire, compelled Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien to check the enemy first. In response to an urgent request from Sir Charles Fergusson, commanding the 5th Division, Allenby brought his cavalry up on the left of the Second Corps, and the cool shooting of our dismounted squadrons and guns and the skilful handling of their machine-guns successfully held the enemy in check. In the meanwhile the 19th Brigade had joined in the fight on our left, while our batteries held the enemy in check in the centre. With his troops thus disposed, Smith-Dorrien gradually broke off the fight in front of the 5th and 3rd Divisions, and gained the new alignment west of Bavay late in the afternoon. As in the action of the previous day, the German infantry had attempted several mass attacks, in the hope, no doubt, that our line was shattered by their artillery. Each of these attacks, however, was beaten back with very severe loss.

Such was the battle of Mons. Ninety-nine years had elapsed since the British Army had measured itself with the greatest military power on the Continent on a serious scale. The fighting in South Africa had caused some superficial critics to doubt whether British troops could be counted upon to maintain their former renown, and insufficient allowance had been made for the unfavourable circumstances which brought about the petty defeats of the Boer campaign. The troops for the most part were indifferent to the merits of the quarrel, the distance was too great from their home for them to believe that they were fighting in defence of their possessions. Generally our infantry were pitted against a mounted antagonist well acquainted with the country, able in every case to avoid decisive combat, elusive, cunning, and unscrupulous, and accustomed to the very trying conditions of fighting and marching at a great altitude on the waterless veldt. The long peace had, it is true, deteriorated both the generals and staff of the British Army, so that faults of leadership, which were apparent even to the men in the ranks, destroyed their confidence and frustrated their efforts. In spite of all these drawbacks, however, the British infantry on repeated occasions gave proof of the finest qualities, and many times repaired the blunders of the higher Command by hard fighting. The resistance of the Boer armies was speedily crumpled up when our troops were launched against them in a vigorous offensive, and during the long, arduous, and tiresome guerilla operations which followed, a large Force consisting both of first-line and new levies distinguished itself by staunch conduct and tactical adaptiveness—whenever, in fact, the hard-and-fast regulations of the service and the faulty training of the parade-ground were relaxed, so that junior leaders had scope to show their courage and skill, the results were eminently satisfactory.

The long war had relieved the Army of some incapable commanders and had brought others to notice of courage and skill. In the interval between the Boer and the German war notable advance was made by the Army as a whole in military science, the administrative services were greatly improved, the cavalry and artillery were trained to act in concert with the masses of a Continental army, and the regimental officers and soldiers of the infantry, small though the available numbers had been, had worked with rare devotion year after year to improve its military value. It is not perhaps surprising, under the novel conditions and with the extremely short interval of time between the dispatch of the Expeditionary Force and its first collision with the German Army, that the executive staff should not have been so successful in organising their machinery and grasping the situation as the regimental leaders.

Although every commander of an army is responsible for informing himself as to what is happening on his right and left, and for maintaining contact with troops on his flanks, yet there can be no excuse for the neglect of the French General Staff to inform Sir John French of their defeat at Charleroi on Saturday, 22nd, and of the danger in which it involved the British army. It was naturally a point of honour to us to hold our ground to the last man so long as our troops formed a part of the general line, but directly that line had fallen back the defence of the salient at Mons could serve no military purpose, and gave the commander of the First German army the opportunity of scoring an important success, either by enveloping our troops on the battlefield or by driving them in confusion within the forts of Maubeuge. General von Kluck was not slow to grasp the possibilities of the situation, though his comrade the commander of the Second army, fortunately for us, was not equally prompt. If the attack on our right from the valley of the Sambre had been delivered with the same energy as the attack on our front at Mons, and at the same time that Sunday afternoon, it would have been far more difficult to shake off the enemy's converging Forces. Our position on Monday morning was far less dangerous, and owing to the skilful direction of the corps commanders and to the rapid manœuvres of the cavalry chief, our troops were enabled to fight under the best conditions of which the perilous situation admitted. The soldiers of all three arms not only behaved with the greatest courage and constancy, but showed great individual skill in the use of their weapons. Although the Germans had at least 500 guns in action against 300 of ours, they never succeeded in establishing a definite superiority of artillery fire. All German reports concur as to the withering effect of our rifle fire and the unpleasant surprise it gave to their troops, who expected an easy prey ; the work of our cavalry was a revelation both to friend and foe as to what the mounted arm is capable of doing even amid the hurricane of missiles of a contemporary battlefield. On the few occasions wherein small units of our troopers succeeded in charging the enemy's horse, the vaunted German cavalry was put to flight by greatly inferior numbers. No troop of British cavalry hesitated to charge the enemy at almost any odds whenever they saw them, but the really important work achieved by our horsemen consisted in reinforcing and prolonging the line of battle with dismounted squadrons. To reach the spot where their fire would be effectual without being overwhelmed by shrapnel, to dismount, come into action rapidly, take up a favourable line, and conceal their horses without losing touch with them, constituted a most difficult feat in the broad glare of the August sunshine within reach of the enemy's long-range guns, and with his aeroplanes buzzing overhead and reporting every movement. Only the best-trained troops, led by competent officers, could have performed the feat. It may be said without exaggeration that in this battle, as in the subsequent fighting on the retreat, the skilful intervention of the cavalry under the command of Sir Edmund Allenby was essential to the delicate operations demanded of our army.

In the absence of any official record of the fighting at Mons other than the necessarily brief dispatch, and in the absence of war correspondents from the army, the most interesting evidence available of the incidents of the struggle is furnished by letters and verbal accounts from the officers and men engaged. The following letter from a wounded officer written in a Belgian hospital a week after the battle gives a good account of the first collision between the German advance guard and our infantry outposts :

> " I do not know if this letter will ever get to you or not, but I am writing on the chance that it will. A lot has happened since I last wrote to you. We marched straight up to Belgium from France, and the first day we arrived my company was put on outposts for the night. During the night we dug a few trenches, etc., so did not get much sleep. The next day the Germans arrived, and I will try and describe the fight. We were only advanced troops of a few hundred holding the line of a canal. The enemy arrived about 50,000 strong. We held them in check all day and killed hundreds of them, and still they came on. Finally, of course, we retired on our main body. I will now explain the part I played. We were guarding a railway bridge over a canal. My company held a semicircle from the railway to the canal. I was nearest the railway. A Scottish regiment completed the semicircle on the right of the railway to the canal. The railway was on a high embankment running up to the bridge, so that the Scottish regiment was out of sight of us. We held the Germans all day, killing hundreds, when about 5 p.m. the order to retire was eventually given. It never reached us and we were left all alone. The Germans therefore got right up to the canal on our right, hidden by the railway embankment, and crossed the railway. Our people had blown up the bridge before their departure. We found ourselves between two fires, and I realised we had about 2,000 Germans and a canal between myself and my friends.
>
> " We decided to sell our lives dearly. I ordered my men to fix bayonets and charge, which the gallant fellows did splendidly, but we got shot down like ninepins. As I was loading my revolver after giving the order to

fix bayonets I was hit in the right wrist. I dropped my revolver, my hand was too weak to draw my sword. This afterwards saved my life. I had not got far when I got a bullet through the calf of my right leg and another in my right knee, which brought me down. The rest of my men got driven round into the trench on our left. The officer there charged the Germans and was killed himself, and nearly all the men were either killed or wounded. I did not see this part of the business, but from all accounts the gallant men charged with the greatest bravery. Those who could walk the Germans took away as prisoners. I have since discovered from civilians that around the bridge 500 Germans were found dead and about sixty English. These sixty must have been nearly all my company, who were so unfortunately left behind.

" As regards myself, when I lay upon the ground I found my coat-sleeve full of blood, and my wrist spurting blood, so I knew an artery of some sort must have been cut. The Germans had a shot at me when I was on the ground to finish me off ; that shot hit my sword, which I wore on my side, and broke it in half just below the hilt ; this turned the bullet off and saved my life. I afterwards found that two shots had gone through my field-glasses, which I wore on my belt, and another had gone through my coat pocket, breaking my pipe and putting a hole through a small collapsible tin cup, which must have turned the bullet off me. We lay out there all night for twenty-four hours. I had fainted away from loss of blood, and when I lost my senses I thought I should never see anything again. Luckily I had fallen on my wounded arm, and the arm being slightly twisted I think the weight of my body stopped the flow of blood and saved me. At any rate, the next day civilians picked up ten of us who were still alive, and took us to a Franciscan convent, where we have been splendidly looked after. All this happened on August 23rd ; it is now September 3rd. I am ever so much better, and can walk about a bit now, and in a few days will be quite

> healed up. It is quite a small hole in my wrist, and it is nearly healed, and my leg is much better; the bullets escaped the bones, so that in a week I shall be quite all right. Unfortunately the Germans are at present in possession of this district, so that I am more or less a prisoner here. But I hope the English will be here in a week, when I shall be ready to rejoin them."

The following letter is an account by a Russian artillery officer of his first experience of a battlefield on the eastern front; but it is so typical of the impression conveyed to individual combatants by their share of the struggle that it is worth reproducing:

> " In times of peace one has no conception of what a battle really means. When war was declared our brigade was dispatched to the theatre of operations. I went with delight, and so did the others. When we reached our destination we were told that the battle would begin in the morning.
>
> " At daybreak positions were assigned to us, and the commander of the brigade handed us a plan of the action of our artillery. From that moment horror possessed our souls. It was not anxiety for ourselves or fear of the enemy, but a feeling of awe in the face of something unknown. At 6 o'clock we opened fire at a mark which we could not distinguish, but which we understood to be the enemy.
>
> " Towards midday we were informed that the German cavalry was attempting to envelop our right wing, and were ordered in that direction. Having occupied our new position we waited. Suddenly we see the enemy coming, and at the same time he opens fire on us. We turn our guns upon him, and I give the order to fire. I myself feel that I am in a kind of nightmare. Our battery officers begin to melt away. I see that the Germans are developing their attack. First one regiment appears, and then another. I direct the guns and pour a volley of projectiles right into the thick of the first regiment. Then a second salvo, and a third. I

see how they fall among the men, and can even discern the dead after the explosion.

"One of the enemy's regiments is annihilated. Then a second one. All this time I am pouring missiles in among them. But now the nervous feeling has left me. My soul is filled with hate, and I continue to shoot at the enemy without the least feeling of pity.

"Yet still the enemy is advancing, rushing forward and lying down in turns. I do not understand his tactics, but what are they to me? It is enough for me that I am occupying a favourable position and mowing him down like a strong man with a scythe in a clover field.

"During the first night after the battle I could not sleep a wink. All the time my mind was filled with pictures of the battlefield. I saw German regiments approaching, and myself firing right into the thick of them. Heads, arms, legs, and whole bodies of men were being flung high into the air. It was a dreadful vision.

"I was in four battles. When the second began I went into it like an automaton. Only your muscles are taxed. All the rest of your being seems paralysed. So complete is the suspension of the sensory processes that I never felt my wound. All I remember is that a feeling of giddiness came over me, and my head began to swim. Then I swooned to the ground and was picked up by the Medical Corps and carried to the rear."

The following letter from Private G. A. Turner to his father, Mr. W. A. Turner of Leeds, was published in the *Leeds Mercury*:

"I am still living, though a bit knocked about. I got a birthday present from the Kaiser. I was wounded on the 23rd. So it was a near thing, was it not? I got your letter at a place called Moroilles, in France, about five miles from Landrecies, where our troops have retired.

"On Sunday, 23rd, we had rifle inspection for 11 a.m., and were ordered to fall in for bathing parade at 11.30. While we were waiting for another company to return from the river the Germans commenced to shell the town. We fell in about 1 p.m., an hour and a half afterwards, to go to the scene of the attack. Shells were bursting in the streets as we went. We crossed a bridge over the canal under artillery fire, and stood doing nothing behind a mill on the bank for some time.

" Then some one cried out that the Germans were advancing along the canal bank, and our company were ordered to go along. We thought we were going to check the Germans, but we found out afterwards that a company of our own regiment were in position further along on the opposite side of the canal, and we were being sent out to reinforce them.

" There was no means of crossing the canal at that point, so it was an impossibility. As soon as we started to move we were spotted by the Germans, who opened fire with their guns at about five hundred yards with shrapnel, and the scene that followed beggars description. Several of us were laid full length behind a wooden fence about half an inch thick. The German shells burst about three yards in front of it. It was blown to splinters in about ten minutes. None of us expected to get out alive.

" They kept us there about an hour before they gave us the word to retire. I had just turned round to go back when I stopped one. It hits you with an awful thump, and I thought it had caught me at the bottom of the spine, as it numbed my legs for about half an hour.

" When I found I could not walk I gave it up. Just after, I got my first view of the Germans. They were coming out of a wood about 400 yards away all in a heap together, so I thought as I was done for I would get a bit of my own back, and I started pumping a bit of lead into them.

" I stuck there for about three-quarters of an hour, and fired all my own ammunition and a lot belonging to two more wounded men who were close to me—about

> 300 rounds altogether, and as it was such a good target I guess I accounted for a good lot of them.
>
> "Then I suddenly discovered I could walk, and so I set off to get back. I had to walk about 150 yards in the open, with shrapnel bursting around me all the way, but somehow or other I got back without catching another. It was more than I expected, I can assure you, and I laughed when I got in the shelter of the mill again.
>
> "I was very sorry to have to leave the other chaps who were wounded, but as I could only just limp along I could not help them in any way. They were brought in later by stretcher-bearers.
>
> "A man who was at Paardeburg and Magersfontein, in South Africa, said they were nothing to what we got that Sunday. Out of 240 men of my company, only about twenty were uninjured."

The impression produced on the ranks of the German army by its first battle with the British was not entirely one of triumph. They had been led by their officers to expect that the British troops were very inferior to the German from every point of view, and the stubborn resistance of the British outposts north of Mons on Sunday afternoon, which was renewed in a pitched battle on Monday morning, greatly surprised the German regiments, who left heaps of their comrades on the ground without preventing the orderly retirement of the two British army corps. Of course the soldier in the ranks had no exact information as to the precise numbers engaged on either side. He was doubtless informed that the German failure to storm our position was due both to its natural strength and to its being occupied by superior numbers. In a contemporary battle troops generally have the impression that they are pitted against superior numbers. It pleases their *amour-propre* and usually fits in with what they personally see of the fighting. The very extent of our position in this as in other battles imposed upon the German leaders and troops by leading them to think that we disposed of more troops than was actually the case. Nevertheless the severe handling which the German infantry suffered at Mons in its attempts to close with the British had important results in subsequent engagements, for the German commanders became much more cautious in thrusting forward against our rearguards, thus missing many opportunities when they were merely opposed by a weak screen, besides delaying the speed of their whole forward march.

From another aspect, however, the result of the battle was more damaging to us. The German Government lost no time in proclaiming that simultaneously with their great victories over the main French armies they had also met and beaten all the forces which Great Britain was at that moment able to put into the field. As proof of the statement was cited the continued retreat of Sir John French's army and its notable losses in prisoners and guns. This version of the battle, eagerly spread abroad by the German wireless and disseminated in the neutral press, certainly exercised powerful influence on the public opinion and policy of neutral countries. Tactical defeats can always be explained to the satisfaction of the War Office involved, but it is a dangerous error indeed to imagine that such explanations carry equal weight elsewhere. Outsiders, sympathetic or otherwise, having generally small knowledge of military science, look principally to the positions on the maps of opposing Forces. If they see that the army of one belligerent is forced to retreat any considerable distance by the army of its rival, they draw the natural conclusion. This is particularly the case after the first big battles of a war, so that strategically the German supreme Command acted rightly in straining every nerve to begin the struggle with a success so decisive that its import could not fail to be understood in Italy, the Balkans, and the United States of America.

CHAPTER VII

THE BRITISH RETREAT FROM THE BELGIAN FRONTIER

Sir John French, in his first dispatch to the Secretary of State for War, thus continues his narrative of the retirement from the position he had taken up with the British right resting on the fortress rayon of Maubeuge and its centre at Bavay, and its left guarded by the 19th Brigade and a cavalry division west of Bavay as far as the villages of Ganlain and Bry:

> " *Further retirement to the Cambrai-Le Cateau-Landrecies line, August 25th.*—The French were still retiring, and I had no support except such as was afforded by the fortress of Maubeuge ; and the determined attempts of the enemy to get round my left flank assured me that it was his intention to hem me against that place and surround me. I felt that not a moment must be lost in retiring to another position.
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> " I had every reason to believe that the enemy's forces were somewhat exhausted, and I knew that they had suffered heavy losses. I hoped, therefore, that his pursuit would not be too vigorous to prevent me effecting my object.
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> " The operation, however, was full of danger and difficulty, not only owing to the very superior force in my front, but also to the exhaustion of the troops.
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> " The retirement was commenced in the early morning of the 25th to a position in the neighbourhood of Le Cateau, and rearguards were ordered to be clear of the Maubeuge-Bavay-Eth road by 5.30 a.m.
>
> " Two cavalry brigades, with the divisional cavalry

of the Second Corps, covered the movement of the Second Corps. The remainder of the cavalry division with the 19th Brigade, the whole under the command of General Allenby, covered the west flank.

"The 4th Division commenced its detrainment at Le Cateau on Sunday the 23rd, and by the morning of the 25th eleven battalions and a brigade of artillery with divisional staff were available for service.

"I ordered General Snow to move out to take up a position with his right south of Solesmes, his left resting on the Cambrai-Le Cateau road south of La Chaprie. In this position the division rendered great help to the effective retirement of the Second and First Corps to the new position.

"Although the troops had been ordered to occupy the Cambrai-Le Cateau-Landrecies position, and the ground had during the 25th been partially prepared and entrenched, I had grave doubts—owing to the information I received as to the accumulating strength of the enemy against me—as to the wisdom of standing there to fight.

"Having regard to the continued retirement of the French on my right, my exposed left flank, the tendency of the enemy's western corps (II) to envelop me, and, more than all, the exhausted condition of the troops, I determined to make a great effort to continue the retreat till I could put some substantial obstacle, such as the Somme or the Oise, between my troops and the enemy, and afford the former some opportunity of rest and reorganisation. Orders were therefore sent to the corps commanders to continue their retreat as soon as they possibly could towards the general line Vermand-St. Quentin-Ribemont.

"The cavalry, under General Allenby, were ordered to cover the retirement.

"Throughout the 25th and far into the evening the First Corps continued its march on Landrecies, following the road along the eastern border of the Forêt de Mormal, and arrived at Landrecies about 10 o'clock. I had

> intended that the corps should come further west, so as to fill up the gap between Le Cateau and Landrecies, but the men were exhausted and could not get further on without rest."

Very early in the morning of the 25th the British troops arose from their bivouacs and from the trenches which they had hastily constructed on the previous evening. Some of them were billeted in the villages and took longer to collect, for owing to the peculiar state of the law in England, which does not permit of troops being billeted in peace manœuvres, our infantry and artillery had had no practice of this essential part of their duty. By making private arrangements Sir Edmund Allenby had been able to give the cavalry division some instruction in billeting and collecting from billets in certain of the autumn manœuvres preceding the war. Most of the regiments had wounded men in the ranks who had been roughly bandaged, but were only just able to march. The unshaven and smoke-begrimed faces, dirty uniforms, and blood-stained bandages told an eloquent tale of what the regiments had endured in the short interval of time which had elapsed since they lined up to defend the position at Mons ; the weather continued to be very hot, and the march was very dusty. It was pursued in two main columns. The First Corps followed the high road from Maubeuge to Landrecies, to the east of the Forêt de Mormal. The Second Corps, which had the greatest distance to go, went through Le Quesnoy by the high road to Le Cateau. The retreat of the Second Corps was covered by the screen provided by the cavalry division, and the 5th Cavalry Brigade acted as a rearguard to the First Corps. Thus protected, the march of the two army corps columns was successfully effected without much interruption from the enemy, but he was known, however, to be pressing in pursuit. A strong column of his cavalry had been directed upon Arras, and the Prussian Second Corps was marching from Tournai on Douai with the object of cutting between our troops and their advanced base at Amiens.

The 4th Division of the Third Corps joined the army on this day, as stated in Sir J. French's dispatch. This division was temporarily assigned to Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's command, and proceeded to entrench a line of outposts covering the small town of Le Cateau and the other localities assigned to the Second Corps for the night. Thus on the evening of the 25th the British army bivouacked in two groups, the smaller in and around the town of Landrecies, which lies south and just clear of the great Forêt de Mormal; and the second group, which consisted of three infantry divisions and an odd brigade with a cavalry division on its outer flank in and around Le Cateau, which is a point of junction of several roads. Now Le Cateau is distant eight miles from Landrecies; not only does the forest of Mormal extend from the fortress girdle of Maubeuge to within a mile and a half of Landrecies, but it is traversed by an excellent road from Bavay. The forest extends about eleven miles from north to south and about seven from east to west.

So it happened that the two British army corps had separated for the march, and while the disposition they had adopted facilitated their rapid retirement it was less favourable to mutual support. The pursuing troops of von Kluck's army had lost touch with Haig's rearguard during the afternoon, but a strong column had marched through the forest parallel to the British retreat, and halted in its southern extremity within the shelter of the woods. The fifth and sixth sections of Sir John French's first dispatch describe the night attack which followed and the fierce fighting by which our army once again extricated itself from the enemy's embrace:

> "The enemy, however, would not allow them this rest, and about 9.30 p.m. a report was received that the 4th Guards Brigade in Landrecies was heavily attacked by troops of the Ninth German Army Corps, who were coming through the forest on the north of the town. This brigade fought most gallantly and caused the enemy to suffer tremendous loss in issuing from the forest into the narrow streets of the town. His loss has been estimated from reliable sources at from 700 to 1,000. At the same time information reached me from Sir Douglas Haig that his 1st Division was also

heavily engaged south and east of Maroilles. I sent urgent messages to the commander of the two French reserve divisions on my right to come up to the assistance of the First Corps, which they eventually did. Partly owing to this assistance, but mainly to the skilful manner in which Sir Douglas Haig extricated his corps from an exceptionally difficult position in the darkness of the night, they were able at dawn to resume their march south towards Wassigny on Guise.

" By about 6 p.m. the Second Corps had got into position with their right on Le Cateau, their left in the neighbourhood of Caudry, and the line of defence was continued thence by the 4th Division towards Seranvillers, the left being thrown back.

" During the fighting on the 24th and 25th the cavalry became a good deal scattered, but by the early morning of the 26th General Allenby had succeeded in concentrating two brigades to the south of Cambrai.

" The 4th Division was placed under the orders of the General Officer Commanding the Second Army Corps.

" On the 24th the French cavalry corps, consisting of three divisions, under General Sordet, had been in billets north of Avesnes. On my way back from Bavay, which was my *poste de commandement* during the fighting of the 23rd and 24th, I visited General Sordet, and earnestly requested his co-operation and support. He promised to obtain sanction from his army commander to act on my left flank, but said that his horses were too tired to move before the next day. Although he rendered me valuable assistance later on in the course of the retirement, he was unable for the reasons given to afford me any support on the most critical day of all, viz. the 26th.

" At daybreak it became apparent that the enemy was throwing the bulk of his strength against the left of the position occupied by the Second Corps and the 4th Division.

" At this time the guns of four German army corps were in position against them, and Sir Horace Smith-

Dorrien reported to me that he judged it impossible to continue his retirement at daybreak (as ordered) in face of such an attack.

" I sent him orders to use his utmost endeavours to break off the action and retire at the earliest possible moment, as it was impossible for me to send him any support, the First Corps being at the moment incapable of any movement.

" The French cavalry corps, under General Sordet, was coming up on our left rear early in the morning, and I sent an urgent message to him to do his utmost to come up and support the retirement of my left flank, but owing to the fatigue of his horses he found himself unable to intervene in any way.

" There had been no time to entrench the position properly, but the troops showed a magnificent front to the terrible fire which confronted them.

" The artillery, although outmatched by at least four to one, made a splendid fight, and inflicted heavy losses on their opponents.

" At length it became apparent that, if complete annihilation was to be avoided, a retirement must be attempted; and the order was given to commence it about 3.30 p.m. The movement was covered with the most devoted intrepidity and determination by the artillery, which had itself suffered heavily, and the fine work done by the cavalry in the further retreat from the position assisted materially in the final completion of this most difficult and dangerous operation.

" Fortunately the enemy had himself suffered too heavily to engage in an energetic pursuit.

" I cannot close the brief account of this glorious stand of the British troops without putting on record my deep appreciation of the valuable services rendered by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

" I say without hesitation that the saving of the left wing of the army under my command on the morning of August 26th could never have been accomplished unless a commander of rare and unusual coolness, intre-

> pidity, and determination had been present to personally conduct the operation."

A letter from an officer in the Brigade of Guards supplements the brief description in the official dispatch :

> " We had a very bad night on Tuesday, August 25th," he said, " when our billets were attacked by the Germans, and a situation arose which at one time looked very serious for our brigade. However, we held our own, and simply mowed the Germans down. The doctors counted over 2,000 of their dead outside the town next morning when they were collecting our wounded.
>
> " I must say now none of us expected to get away. I, with about thirty men, was given a house to defend which commanded two main streets, and we worked away at it from about 10 p.m. until about 1.30 a.m., when we were called out to join the battalion who were going out to attack the Germans with the bayonet. But when we got to the other side of the town we found they had had enough of it, and gone.
>
> " I think I shall never forget that night as long as I live. We all had wonderful escapes, with shrapnel shell bursting continuously, high explosive shells also ; houses burning and falling down from the shell fire ; the intermittent rifle fire, with every now and then furious bursts of fire when the Germans attacked.
>
> " Our biggest fight so far took place at Landrecies. The Germans attacked us in the town furiously. They brought their guns to within fifty yards of us in the dark on the road, and opened point-blank fire. Our gunners brought up a gun by hand, as no horse could have lived, and knocked at least one of the German guns out first shot. This all at about sixty yards."

The First British Corps had halted on both banks of the Sambre, the centre of the 1st Division was at Maroilles and of the 2nd Division at Landrecies. The German pursuing columns had been screened by strong cavalry detachments marching on their front, and had threaded their way by woodland roads through the forest. They had thus escaped the notice of the British airmen, and soon after the First British Army Corps reached its billets on both banks of the Sambre the Ninth German Corps (Schleswig-Holstein) was closing up in rendezvous formation along the edge of the forest. At the same time the right of von Bülow's Second German army was ascending the Sambre in the direction of Maroilles. The weary troops had thrown out a line of outposts, and had not neglected to prepare the outskirts of the two little towns for defence, which precaution stood them in good stead. The men had hardly sunk down to rest, some of them were still trying to snatch a belated meal, for the whole had been on the march all day—in fact, ever since they broke off the fight in the morning—when the rattle of musketry announced a German attack.

The night was dark and rainy, and everything favoured a surprise attack. The German infantry in dense columns brushed aside the British pickets, and attempted to storm Landrecies in several columns. They first of all knocked up against the 4th Guards Brigade, which fortunately for us was constituted with the most reliable elements in the army, the men having all served under the same officers for the three years of their service, and each battalion having been filled up with its own reservists. The close comradeship of their service stood them in good stead on this critical occasion, and the small units were able to assemble where they were billeted and flung themselves with great impetuosity on the advancing Germans. At the same time our machine-guns, which had been skilfully posted to sweep the approaches, opened with deadly effect on the mass of grey-clad infantry, which could now be distinguished by the light of burning houses. The sanguinary *mêlée* which followed recalled the Guards' fight at Inkerman, and the result was the same. The swarms of hostile skirmishers, meeting a resistance which they did not expect, and having been tired by the long march, gave way before the small numbers of Foot Guards, but were soon reinforced by the other troops of the division.

The Germans had brought up one or two batteries close to the fringe of the town, and fired point-blank into the seething mass of men fighting with bayonet in the streets, but their infantry was pushed back, and the guns overturned or captured. At the same time heavy firing from the other bank of the river announced the determined attempt of the Germans to sweep away our right wing. The *coup* was well planned, and narrowly missed success. As it was, it inflicted heavy loss, not so much by the number of men struck down in the fight as by the intense fatigue inflicted by a night's fighting instead of a night's rest, on the top of the struggle which had lasted continuously from midday on Sunday the 23rd, since which hour the troops of the First Corps had no sleep except by snatches when they made short halts, and had not had leisure for a single square meal.

Sir John French had personally been aroused when the firing began by an orderly officer. He mounted his charger, rode towards Landrecies, and found Sir Douglas Haig coolly making all the dispositions that were possible for checking the enemy and for initiating a further withdrawal of his fighting troops. The long procession of motor transport, horse-drawn transport, and guns had got under way at the first alarm, and were already rumbling along the road to Le Cateau. The British Commander-in-Chief immediately notified the commander of the Second Army Corps of the state of the case, and at the same time dispatched a very urgent appeal to the nearest French army corps on his right to strike in and effect a diversion. In the interval before the fire of the French rifles began to rattle through the rainy night our troops, though hard pressed, established an ascendency in hand-to-hand fighting over their German assailants. A large number of the enemy were shot or bayoneted, and before the short summer's night had been lit up by the first streaks of light the flood of the German invasion had ebbed for a while, leaving a considerable number of prisoners in our hands.

The defeated German Corps drifted back to the shelter of the woods, where it was rallied by its leaders for a fresh offensive in the morning, and the British superior officers and staff at once faced the apparently impossible task of rallying the scattered battalions, re-forming the two divisions in line of march, and piloting the two great columns by the roads which led southward along the wooded banks of the river Sambre.

In the early morning the rain ceased, and the ground steamed under the rising sun, giving promise of the sultry day which was to follow. The light had hardly revealed the ground on which the Second Army Corps had halted overnight, when the deadly fire of German artillery began to sweep all likely spots, such as buildings, hollows, cover of any sort, with showers of shrapnel. Once again it was evident that the ranges were carefully calculated, and that spies or observers had penetrated into our lines and notified the effect of the shells. One battery after another, stretching from east to west, and firing from under cover with uncanny accuracy, joined in the combat. But our artillery was not slow in taking up the challenge, though Smith-Dorrien disposed of perhaps 160 guns, and his opponent had more than double as many. The German artillery line overlapped ours, and the uneven struggle cost us the lives of many brave gunners, and smashed up much of our material. Nevertheless our men continued to fight without wavering, and maintained so hot and intense a fire as to keep the hostile batteries at arm's length, but masses of German infantry began to push forward groups of skirmishers, followed by stronger groups in support, with the view to entangling the Second Corps in close combat.

Allenby's cavalry, having acted as a screen during the retreat of the 25th, had become scattered over twenty miles of country, but were reassembled in the neighbourhood of Cambrai on the left rear of the Second Corps in the early morning of the 26th. Once again it was the cavalry patrols who gave notice of a turning movement which threatened to cut in on our line of retreat to St. Quentin, and the cavalry commander let General Smith-Dorrien know the stage which had been reached by the German encircling movement. Smith-Dorrien, seeing the danger of breaking off the fight without inflicting a sharp repulse upon the heads of the enemy's columns, notified his intention to Sir John French, at the same time demanding the co-operation of the First

Army Corps. French's reply, as quoted from his dispatch, explained that the German night attack and subsequent movements of the First Corps had left its troops in too exhausted a condition for combined action with the Second Corps. All that was practicable for our right wing was to retreat as rapidly as possible through Etreux and Wassigny towards Guise and Longchamps. The Second Corps was to continue its retirement towards St. Quentin as soon as it could shake off the pursuing columns of the enemy.

The battle fought by the Second Army Corps at Le Cateau closely resembled the engagement of the 24th south of Mons. The German infantry, relying upon the crushing effect of their artillery fire, advanced in dense swarms at several points, and attempted to storm the position in which the British infantry were roughly entrenched. The steady fire of our companies and their machine-guns repulsed all these attacks, with very severe loss to the foe, who fought with extreme gallantry and actually succeeded at some points in crossing bayonets with our men. Two brigades of Allenby's cavalry guarded the left, and acted in support of our line; the other two brigades came into action on foot with the 5th Division, which was being sorely pressed, and which had borne the brunt during the morning of the severest German attacks.

By 3 o'clock the efforts of the enemy visibly relaxed. Fighting had lasted for nearly twelve hours, and an immense amount of ammunition had been consumed, but the losses of the assailants, who had attacked with considerable recklessness, had been much heavier than on our side, for the British infantry were partially entrenched, and skilfully helped by our artillery. The corps commander now resolved to begin his withdrawal, and, covered by the renewed fire of his batteries, the retreat of the infantry began. The operation was extremely difficult and delicate; the firing lines were so extended that it was impossible to rally everybody or to break off all the local combats, and we lost a certain number of prisoners before our marching columns could get out of range of the enemy's fire. The retirement of the 4th Division was facilitated by a vigorous attack by the French troops led by Generals d'Amade and Sordet against the German right. Once again the retreat was covered by the British cavalry, who cleverly used their mobility to cover the broad front of the battlefield, and whose skilful fire tactics foiled and bewildered the hostile pursuit. It is very remarkable that on no occasion during this critical retreat did the mass of German cavalry make any attempt to employ shock tactics, in spite of the theories so sedulously encouraged in their army in time of peace. No wonder that our cavalry regiments began to entertain an almost reckless contempt of their mounted adversary, who unquestionably neglected several important opportunities of inflicting a severe blow by charging home in the first few days of the campaign! It is, however, only just to remark that as usual the demands made on the mounted arm required an even larger force than was at the disposal of the German right wing. German cavalry were sweeping the whole country from Brussels to Ghent, and Lille; and on the right flank of the army invading France the German squadrons were raiding as far as Arras and westward towards the coast. Cavalry cannot be in two places at once, and it is probable that the German Supreme Command blundered in the distribution of their cavalry divisions, for while several of these divisions were idling in rear of their line in the Ardennes, their right wing was insufficiently provided with horsemen.

The narrative of the Rev. Owen Spencer Watkins, already quoted by several writers who have published early accounts of these operations, gives a very vivid picture of the experiences of an individual during this hot engagement:

> " Horses and men " (he said), " transport and guns, an endless procession they passed, blackened with grime, bearing evident signs of the past few days of fighting. And behind were the infantry, still engaged in a rearguard action. But the men were in good spirits; they were retreating, but this was not a defeated army. . . . The town of Cambrai was now in sight, and we were told that just beyond it, at a place called Le Cateau, was a position we could hold, and here we should entrench and make a

stand. . . . Once I passed through a division of French cavalry, who greeted me most courteously, and were very curious to know exactly what my duties with the army were. A great contrast they presented to our khaki-clad troops in their blue and red and gold, but it struck me that such finery was hardly likely to be so serviceable as our more sombre khaki.

"On the morning of Wednesday, August 26th, after four hours' sleep in the rain, I was awakened by the sound of heavy guns, and rose from my bed of straw to realise that the battle of Le Cateau had begun. As I had slept booted and spurred, no time was wasted in toilet, and I was able at once to ride off to the scene of action whilst the ambulance wagons and stretcher-bearers were making ready to do likewise. I visited the infantry lining their trenches, but they had not yet come into action. As I talked with them I little thought how many hundreds of these lads of the 14th Infantry Brigade (Manchesters, Suffolks, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and East Surreys) would be lying low before the end of the day. Later I was for a while with the 108th Heavy Battery, whose guns were masked with corn-sheaves to hide them from the German aeroplanes, and who even whilst I was with them did terrible execution. The great 60-pounder shells were bursting with wonderful precision and deadly effect, and before the day was over this battery alone had completely exterminated two batteries of German artillery. My next move was to the 15th Brigade Royal Field Artillery, which had just come into action. The story of these batteries is one of the most moving and heroic in the war, and perhaps some day it will be fully told. The losses amongst both men and horses were appalling, yet still they worked their guns. In one battery only a junior officer and one man was left, but between them they still contrived to keep the gun in action.

"Now the battle was in full swing, the noise was deafening; the whole can only be described by one who has himself passed through a similar experience.

" . . . The casualties were pouring in upon us now, and the worst cases still lay in the trenches, from which they could not be moved until the fire slackened or darkness came. The injured men told of brave and dogged fighting in the trenches ; of an opposing host that seemed without number, of casualties so numerous that they seemed to us an exaggeration, and later of trenches that were being enfiladed by German shrapnel. Evidently the French who, we understood, were on our flank had been late in arriving, or else they had retreated, leaving our flank exposed. By this time other batteries were taking up their positions in our vicinity, and it soon became evident that the position was becoming impossible for a dressing station. But how to move ? that was the question ; for we had far more wounded than it was possible to carry in our ambulance wagons. So we sorted out all who were able to hop or walk, or be helped along by comrades, and they were told that they must walk to Busigny as best they could. Meanwhile the operating tents were being pulled down and packed upon the wagons, and as the last were being loaded shell was bursting over our camp. To me was delegated the task of shepherding the wounded who were walking, and seeing them safe to Busigny railway station, where it was hoped they would get a train to take them down country. I never want such a task again. Up and down that road I galloped, urging one poor fellow to hop faster, expostulating with another who, seated by the roadside, declared he could go no further, and that to fall into the hands of the Germans would be no worse than the agony he endured as he walked. At last I came across a farmer's cart, and, taking the law into my own hands, commandeered it and made the man come back with me, and pick up all who could walk no more. Time and again there would be a burst of shrapnel in the road, but as far as I could see nobody was injured. Just off the road the cavalry were at work doing their best to guard our flank as we retreated—for now I learned we were in full retreat—and amongst them the

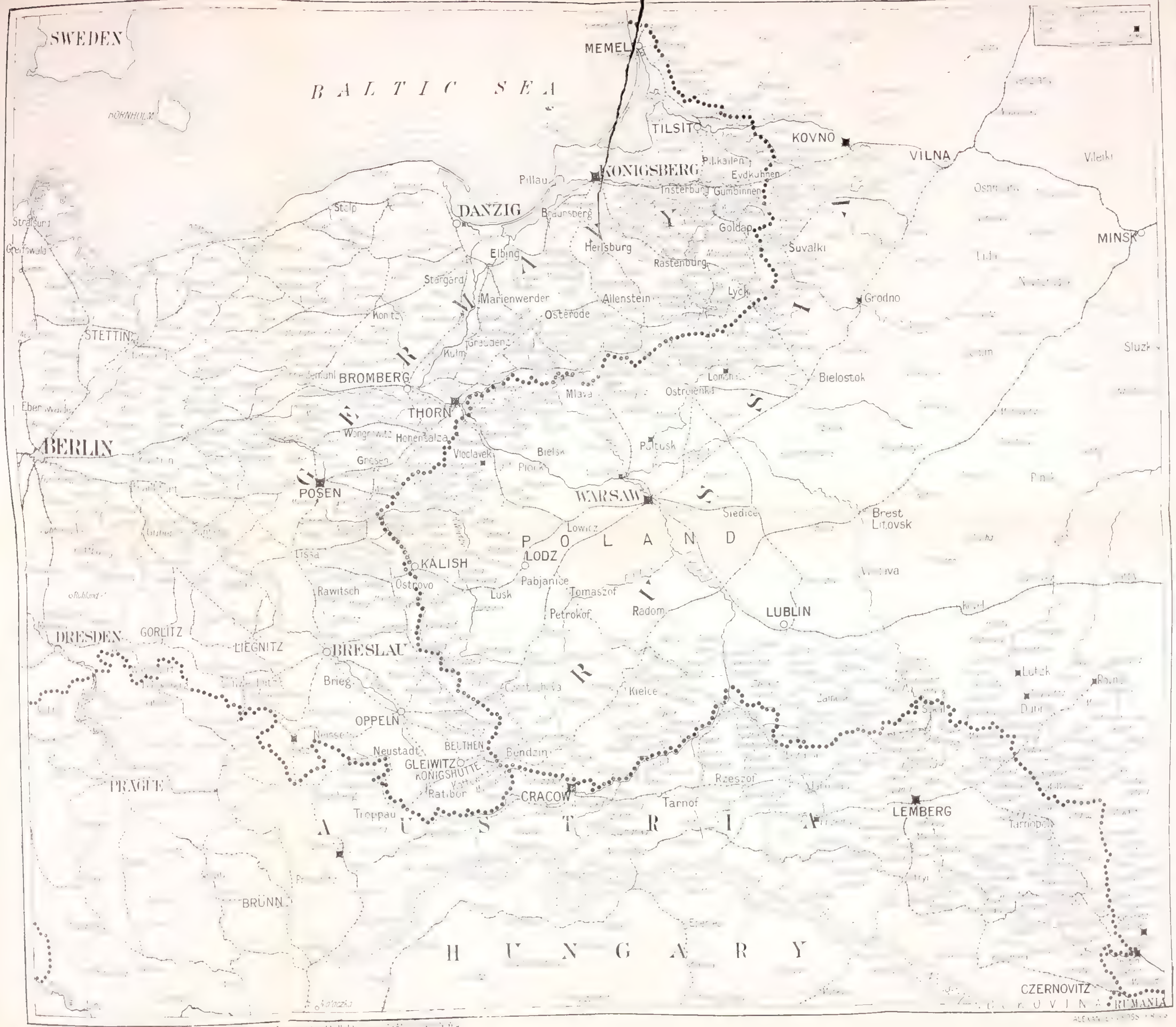
> casualties were heavy. Such as we could reach we carried with us. At last, to my infinite relief, Busigny was reached, and I was relieved of my charge."

At Le Cateau the 5th Division lost probably more heavily than any other portion of the British Forces.

A main road runs from Le Cateau through Bohain to St. Quentin, and the distance is about twenty miles. Another main road runs from Cambrai through Le Catelet to St. Quentin, and a network of country lanes connects the two and intersects the angle between them. Smith-Dorrien's right wing used the first of these roads while his centre and left were constrained to use the country lanes, and the Roman road which connects Le Cateau with the second of the main roads mentioned. There was no time to prepare march tables, nor to make calculations. None of the usual precautions were possible for ensuring the correct position on the road of the different units. Guns, vehicles, and infantry were mixed up in long processions, and had to find their way as best they could through a maze of lanes whose sign-posts had in many cases been destroyed. It was unavoidable that some columns crossed one another, and that some lost their direction and strayed into the enemy's troops; nevertheless the discipline of our troops stood the test well, and the march was prosecuted almost without a halt until the troops reached the friendly neighbourhood of St. Quentin, where the whole army rallied and was able to rest, having gained nearly a day's march on the main body of their pursuers. But this march, executed after a long and severe battle, and after the crushing fatigues of the three previous days' fighting and marching, took a heavy toll in *personnel* owing to the number of men who fell down from sheer inability to proceed, and who strayed from their regiments and wandered about the country.

The Army Service Corps with motor-transport much of which had been improvised since the beginning of the campaign, made splendid efforts to assist the troops, to distribute rations, and even to carry stragglers, wounded, and exhausted men. Several convoys of motor lorries were parked by the roadside to enable the retreating troops to pass, and were left between our rearguard and the enemy. Had it not been for the astonishing efforts of our cavalry to interpose a screen between the Germans and our men, all this transport must have been lost. As it was the greater part escaped, following the troops in the darkness, and in several notable instances fighting its way through patrols of the enemy's cavalry. The British Commander-in-Chief had no alternative whatever but this costly retreat. The French army on his right was still retreating; and, with the exception of the two reserve divisions who had come to the rescue of the 1st Division on the right bank of the Sambre on the night of the 25th-26th, as already described, the British Forces had had but little assistance from their allies in fighting the First German army, until the afternoon of the 26th. About 3 o'clock the line of German guns outflanking our own was making its fiercest effort to crush the resistance of the 4th Division. The horse artillery under Allenby's command was in action on our left rear against a great superiority of the enemy's guns in size and number. On our left rear the ground was wooded and a small stream flowed northward through a narrow valley. The woods were picketed by our dismounted cavalry, who strove desperately to keep the enemy's encircling attacks at arm's length. The struggle had reached its utmost intensity, and an officer who has seen the whole campaign described it as the fiercest fire in his experience. Shells, machine-guns, and rifles made a continual din, and the position of our troops was peppered with missiles and *débris* from explosions. There was no sign of wavering in our line, but it seemed doubtful whether the position could be held until dark, or whether it was possible to break off the fight.

Like an advancing tide the enemy's skirmishers in small and large groups were gradually gaining ground, when all of a sudden the right group of the enemy's artillery ceased firing at the British line, and turned their attention on another target. The advanced guard of the French Forces under the command of General d'Amade had begun to make


SWEDEN
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Pillau
Insterburg
Gumbinnen
DANZIG
Braunsberg
Goldap
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Stralsund
Greifswald
Heilsburg
Suvalki
MINSK
Elbing
Rastenburg
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Allenstein
Grodno
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STETTIN
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Eberswalde
THORN
BERLIN
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Pultusk
Vloclavek
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LIEGNITZ
BRESLAU
Brieg
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Lutsk
OPPELN
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BEUTHEN
Bendzin
GLEIWITZ
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Ratibor
CRACOW
Rzeszof
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themselves felt, and the French cavalry had joined hands with ours in the woods on our left. It is therefore probable that Sir John French was not quite correct in stating that the French cavalry corps of General Sordet gave him no assistance on the 26th, for this corps had now joined General d'Amade's command.

Having failed to turn the British left on the battlefield both on the 24th and 26th, and having equally failed to pen our forces into Maubeuge, the Germans trusted to a relentless pursuit in order utterly to exhaust our troops, to destroy their resolution, and shatter their cohesion. Such a retreat as the situation forced upon us was indeed calculated to shake the determination of the best troops, and not seldom is more deadly to the health of an army than defeat on the battlefield itself. It was MacMahon's retreat from the battlefield of Worth, prolonged through the night, although the pursuit was slack, that caused the ruin of his magnificent army, rather than the severe losses sustained in the battle. Some circumstances militated in our favour. The necessity imposed upon the Germans for taking account of the French Forces on our right and left somewhat hampered their action, the lovely weather that prevailed at night refreshed our men after the scorching heat of the day, and in spite of the terror inspired by German cruelties in Belgium the French peasantry did all in their power to assist our troops by supplying them with all they possessed, by giving information, and by concealing fugitives. The escape of the army would hardly have been possible had another forced march been necessary instead of the repose at St. Quentin, and it is impossible to be too thankful that the enemy failed to strike at the retreating columns with a force of cavalry superior to our own.

As it was, the losses sustained by our five divisions from August 23rd to the 26th inclusive, both in men and material, were very severe, and for the time being clipped our claws until batteries could be refitted and drafts of men from England could replace the losses we had endured. The troops, however, were well aware that on the battlefield at any rate they had held their own, and inflicted several bloody repulses upon greatly superior numbers of the enemy. Consequently they did not lose heart, and speedily rallied, with a fierce desire to resume the offensive and repay what they had suffered.

The strictest precautions were taken to conceal the military situation from the British people. The news, however, gradually became known. Isolated groups of British soldiers who had straggled from the retreating army reached the coast and even crossed the Channel, carrying with them lurid tales of disaster. The newspaper correspondents, some of whom were at that period in Northern France, forbore to publish information they had acquired, but a dispatch to the *Times*, describing the Expeditionary Force as a "broken army," was allowed to pass the Censor. The War Minister probably perceived the necessity of rousing the country by publishing the critical state of affairs. As the Anglo-French armies retreated from the Belgian frontier the strong force of German cavalry which formed the extreme right of the invading host captured Lille and crossed the Artois hills into the basin of the Somme, thus cutting the communication of the British army through Amiens to Boulogne.

There remained no French troops in the department of the North-west except numerous detachments of Territorials who were guarding the railways, so that the enemy's cavalry met with scarcely any resistance. They acted, however, with extreme caution, and made no attempts to molest the ports of Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne. These harbours, however, had to be cleared of shipping, and this fact emphasised rumours which were now circulating in London as to the turn events had taken at the seat of war. There was however no disposition to panic in London, though intense anxiety prevailed, which was heightened by the secretive policy of the Government and by the bewildering supply of contradictory telegrams from all quarters.

THE RETREAT TO THE MARNE

August 27th was another hot day. When it dawned the British Forces were grouping themselves on the line Vermand-

St. Quentin-Ribemont. Some regiments had been hastily billeted, but the greater part of the Force had snatched a short rest by the roadside or in the fields in the neighbourhood of which it had happened to halt; the tail of the columns was still staggering along the dusty roads, and presented a picture which was sad to look upon. The spick-and-span regiments of the British Line were reduced to a procession of men who were almost tired to death. In some cases the troops had abandoned their arms and packs, but the majority still marched in military order. They looked, however, like men moving in a dream, and the faces of the young soldiers gave the impression of premature old age or of the grip of a deadly sickness, so intense had been the strain of the last ninety-six hours. The First Army Corps, whose march had not been molested on the 26th, was the first completely to recover military order, and marched by the roads in the valley of the Oise to La Fère and Chaulny. The march of the Second Army Corps was directed towards Noyon on the Oise, ten miles below Chaulny. By this time too the fury of the German pursuit had somewhat spent itself, and doubtless an inspection of their marching columns on August 27th would have revealed a state of things which closely resembled our own plight. Their troops also had been marching incessantly since the occupation of Brussels on August 20th, and had been violently engaged. Superior numbers had certainly made it possible to relieve from time to time the troops in immediate contact with the enemy, but on the other hand they had covered even greater distances. With as little delay as possible the British detachments which straggled north of St. Quentin were rallied, re-formed, and directed on the line of march; as soon as our rearguards had crossed the River Somme, Allenby's cavalry once more interposed an effective screen between his main body and the German cavalry, which now at length took up the pursuit.

From La Fère and Chaulny the First Army Corps continued its retreat to the line of the Aisne between Soissons and Compiègne. The Second Army Corps descended the valley of the Oise, and by the night of the 28th was securely grouped round Compiègne, where for several days it lay secure from annoyance. In the meanwhile the French armies were making themselves felt on our right and left. On the 28th a sharp counterstroke against the Prussian Guards drove one division in confusion through Guise, while on our left the 61st and 62nd Reserve Divisions, under General d'Amade, together with the oft-referred-to cavalry divisions of General Sordet, pivoting on Amiens, were threatening the right flank of the German advance in the valley of the Somme and the country north of it. From August 29th till the 31st, our troops were able to repose in the valley of the Aisne, sheltered by the dense Forêt de l'Aigue, which clothes the country lying between the Aisne and the Oise. Our line of communications had been transferred from Amiens to Le Havre, and thence to the valley of the Oise. It was almost immediately afterwards transferred to St. Nazaire, with advanced base at Le Mans. These changes of the line of communication, which sound quite simple on paper, were military operations of importance and complexity, and their rapid accomplishment reflected the highest credit both upon the administrative branches of our army, the Quartermaster-General's department under Sir William Robertson, and the lines of communication under Major-General Robb. They reflect no less credit on the military administration of the French railways, which thus succeeded in moving the vast stores accumulated at Amiens without loss, while the enemy had pressed forward within a couple of days' march of the town.

It was in a sortie from Compiègne that Jeanne d'Arc was taken prisoner by the Burgundians, who then handed her over to the English, and her statue adorns the town. The magnificent palace, standing in the midst of beautiful woodland scenery at the junction of the Oise and the Aisne, was the favourite residence of the Emperor Napoleon III. This vast château still belongs to the French State, and was last used to entertain the Tsar and Tsarina, Nicholas II and his Consort. It now became the quarters and offices of the British divisions and brigades, and its stately courtyard was filled with motor-cars and their attendants, and formed the headquarters of the Expeditionary Force. In the woodland country on both banks of the Oise our cavalry took up a line of posts which was supported at some points by infantry, and a continual coming and going of motor-cars and motor-bicycles along the fine roads of the district speedily linked up the line of battle of the Allies and made possible the concerted action which was soon to have such important results; for Sir John French was now in telephonic communication with the headquarters of the French armies on either side of our own.

To form a correct idea of the situation of the British army it is now necessary to take a look round, and briefly to summarise the stupendous events which had occurred while our troops were fighting hard to escape the German envelopment. On the same fateful Sunday, August 23rd, upon which the Germans began their attack at Mons, the masses of the French army were compelled to fall back right along the frontier. On the extreme right the French withdrawal from Alsace had become necessary. The French forces evacuated the Donon Mountain and the Col de Saales in the Vosges. Lunéville fell into the hands of the enemy, and the French army of the Meuse, defeated in the Ardennes, painfully regained French territory. At the very moment when the Germans were gaining these victories in the west, however, a formidable Russian army penetrated into East Prussia. It traversed the district of the Masurian Lakes, and occupied Soldau and Allenstein and the towns in their neighbourhood. On August 23rd, too, Japan declared war against Germany.

Survey of Events

Throughout the day of August 24th the retreat of the French continued. Mézières and the other passages of the Meuse fell into the hands of the enemy, but east of Nancy General de Castelnau, having rallied his army which had been beaten in the battle of Morhange on the 20th, had delivered a tremendous counterstroke, and had driven the Germans back to the river Seille. On the same day, too, the Belgians in Antwerp had recovered Malines and threatened

Brussels; a powerful Austrian army, having invaded Poland, captured Kielce. On Tuesday, 25th, the Germans captured Namur, and the loss of this fortress was said to have upset the calculations of the French commanders, who had reckoned that its detached forts would hold out against the Germans at least as long as the forts of Liége. Following up their success against the army of the Meuse, the Germans pushed the French rearguard through Sedan after some sharp fighting. The French evacuation of Alsace continued, and once again the ill-fated town of Mulhouse had to be abandoned to the enemy. At the same time the Austrian advance in Poland continued, and a declaration of war against Japan was promulgated by the Emperor Francis Joseph.

Wednesday the 26th, described by Sir John French as the most critical day of all in his retreat, saw the beginning of the mighty struggle between the main Forces of the Austrians and Russians in Eastern Galicia, and on the same date the greater part of the French army which had invaded Alsace marched towards the railway junctions of the interior so as to entrain for a journey right across France, from the extreme right to the extreme left of the line of battle.

In the meanwhile there had been a change of Government in Paris. The Ministers had wisely resolved to anticipate any popular discontent which would be excited by the intelligence of the French defeats as soon as they were known, and a reconstruction of the Cabinet was effected on a national basis. The Radical M. Viviani continued to be Prime Minister, and every important group in the Chamber was offered or given a political post in the new administration. It was declined by M. Denys Cochin, the leader of the Catholic Right, but he and his friends were pledged to support the Government in the energetic prosecution of the war. M. Millerand, who commanded the confidence of the Army, replaced M. Messimy as Minister for War, and M. Delcassé became Minister for Foreign Affairs. Delcassé was the French statesman who more than any other had been responsible for the *entente* with England. For this and for other reasons he was peculiarly obnoxious to the German Government, who, it is stated, had demanded and obtained his resignation from the same post at the time of the first Morocco quarrel when neither France nor Russia were in a position to offer effective resistance to the behests of Berlin.

Defence of Paris

The first act of the new Government was to appoint the capable General Gallieni to be Military Governor of Paris with instructions to prepare for its defence with all possible energy. Since the forts were in no condition to withstand the bombardment of the German heavy artillery, and as the ground in their vicinity was cumbered and intersected with villas and buildings which blocked their field of fire, the new Governor of Paris was loaded with a fearful responsibility. He faced it, however, with the greatest courage and determination. The reserve and territorial divisions within his command, reinforced by large gangs of navvies, were at once set to work digging trenches, loopholing the walls and the houses, and constructing entanglements of barbed wire. The internal discipline of the civilian population left nothing to be desired. Supplies of every sort were accumulated as fast as the railways could bring them, and Gallieni was able to report to the French headquarters in the field that if the German attack on the capital could be staved off for a clear fortnight he would guarantee to defend it against all comers.

The detached fort of Manonvillier near Lunéville was bombarded and captured by the Germans on the 25th, but this success was balanced by the first victory of the Russians over the Austrians at Lutzow, and in another part of the vast theatre of war the Russians were preparing to blockade and invest Königsberg. As the masses of the French army of the Meuse fell back sullenly from the north-eastern frontier into the interior of the country, their rearguards faced about and checked the German pursuit by fierce counterstrokes at Lannoy, at Signy l'Abbé, and Novion Porcien, but the great event of the last three days of that eventful week, August 27th, 28th, and 29th, was the tremendous struggle between the army which the Germans had with feverish haste concentrated in East Prussia against the Russian invasion and the Russian army of Vilna. It resulted in the retreat of the whole of the Russian left wing through the lake district, and culminated in the fearful disaster of Tannenberg.

The general military situation of the Allies in France was at its lowest ebb after these events. The German offensive had so far been successful at every point; the German armies were penetrating rapidly into the heart of French territory, and menacing the capital itself. Nevertheless the greater number of the French army corps had not yet experienced the impression of German superiority. The very fact that the French failure had been incurred in a spirited offensive, and that they had been able to strike back repeated heavy blows as they retreated, and had compelled their enemy to advance with caution, had kept up the spirits of the French soldiers. Moreover, certain leaders had already been able to prove their courage and capacity, and had won the affection and confidence of their troops. The immense extent of the operations, and the fact that in a big battle only a portion of the defeated army is severely handled, had enabled the French chiefs to withdraw the bulk of their Forces from the enveloping grip of the German advance without suffering the impression of disaster to become general. But in these days the retreat of a great army is always very costly. Large numbers of stragglers and wounded inevitably fall into the hands of the enemy. Large numbers of guns have frequently to be sacrificed in rearguard actions, to keep the enemy at bay as long as possible, and it is always impracticable for a retreating army to carry along with it all the material which would be useful to the enemy.

The French armies as they retreated began at this date to destroy quite effectively the bridges, railways, and tunnels on the path of invasion, so that in addition to the increasing difficulties of supplying their vast hordes as they penetrated further from their base, the Germans were compelled to stop to repair the roads and viaducts, by no means an easy task when the vast volume of traffic required by their army is borne in mind. In proportion, too, as the Germans lengthened their communications and increased their difficulties, the French armies were falling back towards their own arsenals and towards the centre of their national power, so that losses in men and material could be quickly replaced. Owing to the fine network of military railways in North-eastern France, various clever combinations were possible by removing troops by train just as the Germans began to feel the pinch of moving and supplying their army by only three lines the French portions of which were rendered temporarily useless by demolitions.

A yet more important factor in the situation of the contending armies was the fortified region stretching from Verdun southwards to Epinal, against which the German army was advancing. The fortress of Verdun was too strong to be rushed by the summary methods which had proved successful at Liége and Namur, and Toul could not even be approached while General de Castelnau's army held the adversary in check east of Nancy. The fortress of Verdun and barrier forts on the Meuse split up the advance of the German armies and necessitated troops for their investment; thus the valley of the Meuse divided the line of German armies at a critical point. In spite of its unreadiness the entrenched camp of Paris, defended by an unknown number of reserve divisions and Territorials, also presented a formidable problem to the invaders of France. If Paris was attacked and captured before the main mass of the French field army was disposed of, a large and important fraction of the German host would be absorbed in the operation, and the Forces left in the field might prove too weak to inflict decisive defeat upon the united masses of General Joffre, so that in spite of the apparently unfavourable aspect of the campaign for the Allies when Sir John French rallied his army at Compiègne, and the masses of the French army on his right continued to fall back on the same alignment, the French leaders had ample justification for their confidence in the ability of their brave troops to turn the tables at an early date. The continued and rapid advance of the enemy into France however, the terror they had inspired by their cruelties in Belgium, and by certain disgraceful incidents of the same type since they had passed on to French territory, had created a numbed feeling of despondency in the civil population, great numbers of whom fled before the enemy's advanced troops, carrying with them all they could, cumbering the roads with carriages and motor-cars, and creating an impression of defeat wherever they appeared.

These dark days were a severe test both of individuals and of the nation, and the fortitude displayed by both as the apparently invincible foe once more approached the walls of Paris will ever be a glorious page in French history. The presence, too, of the British army in France, its valiant conduct in the fierce battles of Mons and Le Cateau, and the profound belief of the French that it was but the vanguard of the Forces which the British Empire could be counted on to send to their support, proved a mighty consolation and encouragement to the whole French nation to support the resolve of the intrepid generals who held the supreme command in the field.

Sir John French's second dispatch to the Secretary of State for War, dated September 17th, 1914, gives a fair and concise summary of the British operations from August 27th to September 21st:

> " On that evening [*i.e.* August 27th], the retirement of the Force was followed closely by two of the enemy's cavalry columns, moving south-east from St. Quentin.
>
> " The retreat in this part of the field was being covered by the 3rd and 5th Cavalry Brigades. South of the Somme General Gough, with the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, threw back the Uhlans of the Guard with considerable loss.
>
> " General Chetwode, with the 5th Cavalry Brigade, encountered the eastern column near Cerizy, moving south. The brigade attacked and routed the column, the leading German regiment suffering very severe casualties and being almost broken up.
>
> " The Seventh French Army Corps was now in course of being railed up from the south to the east of Amiens. On the 29th it nearly completed its detrainment, and the French Sixth army got into position on my left, its right resting on Roye.

"The Fifth French army was behind the line of the Oise between La Fère and Guise.

"The pursuit of the enemy was very vigorous; some five or six German corps were on the Somme, facing the Fifth army on the Oise. At least two corps were advancing towards my front, and were crossing the Somme east and west of Ham. Three or four more German corps were opposing the Sixth French army on my left.

"This was the situation at 1 o'clock on the 29th, when I received a visit from General Joffre at my headquarters.

"I strongly represented my position to the French Commander-in-Chief, who was most kind, cordial, and sympathetic, as he has always been. He told me that he had directed the Fifth French army on the Oise to move forward and attack the Germans on the Somme, with a view to checking pursuit. He also told me of the formation of the Sixth French army on my left flank, composed of the Seventh Army Corps, four reserve divisions, and Sordet's corps of cavalry.

"I finally arranged with General Joffre to effect a further short retirement towards the line Compiègne-Soissons, promising him, however, to do my utmost to keep always within a day's march of him.

"In pursuance of this arrangement the British Forces retired to a position a few miles north of the line Compiègne-Soissons on the 29th.

"The right flank of the German army was now reaching a point which appeared seriously to endanger my line of communications with Havre. I had already evacuated Amiens, into which place a German reserve division was reported to have moved.

"Orders were given to change the base of St. Nazaire, and establish an advanced base at Le Mans. This operation was well carried out by the Inspector-General of Communications.

"In spite of a severe defeat inflicted upon the Guard Tenth and Guard Reserve Corps of the German Army by the First and Third French Corps on the right of the Fifth army, it was not part of General Joffre's plan to pursue this advantage ; and a general retirement on to the line of the Marne was ordered, to which the French Forces in the more eastern theatre were directed to conform.

" A new army (the Ninth) had been formed from three corps in the south by General Joffre, and moved into the space between the right of the Fifth and left of the Fourth armies.

" Whilst closely adhering to his strategic conception to draw the enemy on at all points until a favourable situation was created from which to assume the offensive, General Joffre found it necessary to modify from day to day the methods by which he sought to attain this object, owing to the development of the enemy's plans and changes in the general situation.

" In conformity with the movements of the French Forces, my retirement continued practically from day to day. Although we were not severely pressed by the enemy, rearguard actions took place continually."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

It is always exceedingly difficult to choose the precise point at which a certain disastrous line of action is discontinued, and a successful policy substituted, both in public and private life. The official statements of the French Government would seem to claim that the ebb of the tide of German invasion was due to the concentration of a strong army within the entrenched camp of Paris, which assumed the offensive only when the First German army, having abandoned the threat of attacking the capital, marched south-eastward to join in a grand attack upon the French field armies on the Marne. It might, however, be claimed with greater historical accuracy that the turn of the tide was due to the correction of the initial strategical blunder of the French General Staff, when Alsace was invaded with strong Forces which should have been employed at the decisive theatre on the northern frontiers. The transfer of the French army of Alsace to the region of Amiens took place by rail in the last days of August, and at the same stroke the initiative was temporarily regained by the French Commander-in-Chief.

The spirited attitude and active movement of the 61st and 62nd French Reserve Divisions, which with a cavalry corps constituted General d'Amade's command, had begun to exercise an important influence on the German operations as early as midday on the 26th. By hovering just outside the German flank, by fighting partial actions with the German cavalry and the German Second Corps, General d'Amade had not only taken the pressure off the British army, but had also compelled von Kluck to detach troops as far west as the line Arras-Amiens, besides rendering him uneasy concerning the communications of this army corps with the German base in Belgium. The uneasiness which the comparatively small Force under General d'Amade gave to the enemy, suggests that a stronger army pivoting on the coast would have dislocated the German plans to a far more serious extent. No use whatever was made at this period of the campaign by the Allies of their undisputed control of the French and Belgian coast, although it is evident from the precautions taken by the German commander that he dreaded beyond all things an irruption of British troops which might intercept him from Brussels, and this cautious attitude was still maintained even after the British Expeditionary Force was known by the Germans to have concentrated near Compiègne.

The movements of the First German army during the last five days of August were slow and cautious. On the 29th they captured La Fère, formerly a strong place, which, however, had not been prepared for defence. Von Kluck was closing up his columns and reorganising the units which had been decimated in the fierce fights of the 24th and 26th. In the meanwhile the Sixth French army was being constituted at Amiens. The Seventh Army Corps, which had achieved considerable successes over the Germans in Alsace, and which consequently had acquired a prestige and self-confidence of the highest value, had detrained at Amiens on the 28th and 29th. Another reserve division arrived on the 30th, and considerable Forces of Territorials from the north were concentrating on the same point after fighting a sharp rearguard action with the Germans at Bapaume, half-way between Amiens and Cambrai—a battlefield of 1870. On the 30th the Pomeranians knocked up against still stronger French Forces at Albert, half-way between Bapaume and Amiens, and on the night of the 30th the left wing of the Sixth French army covered Amiens with a hundred guns in battery north of the Somme, while its centre and right stretched along the road to Roye, where it linked up with Allenby's cavalry.

Fighting of a desultory character took place over a wide semicircle on both banks of the Somme during the most gorgeous afternoon of that gorgeous summer. The harvest was partly cut, and the peasants never ceased work in the fields, hastily packing the golden corn in shocks. Along the many roads which radiate from the capital of Picardy an almost continuous procession of motor-cars, country carts, troops, and inhabitants blocked the ways. These streams converged into the narrow streets of the ancient city, where the people were still carrying on the ordinary business of life, driving a brisk commerce with the passing soldiers and standing about in groups to discuss the news. The trams continued to run as best they could through the crowd, and from the direction of the battlefield motor-cars and ambulances continued to bring in numerous wounded whose white faces and rough bandages soaked with blood brought home the meaning of the distant growl of artillery firing.

Battle of Amiens

The principal hotel, well known to English tourists, was crowded to overflowing with the picturesque uniforms of French officers. General d'Amade had fixed his quarters there for the night, and the courtyard was full of the motor-cars of his staff. As the darkness closed on the town a succession of orderlies on motor-bicycles brought reports from the surrounding villages, which were received by a tall officer wearing the scarlet dolman and pantaloons of the Spahis. The general was only able to snatch a very short night's rest. He was aroused at two in the morning by a report which took him and his train of motor-cars out into the country south of Amiens. When day dawned the approaches to the town were defended by Territorial infantry with a brigade of Senegalese Rifles in reserve, who held the height of St. Pierre while the numerous batteries of the Seventh Corps filed out southward on the road to Breteuil. The 31st was Sunday, and the most beautiful cathedral in Northern France was filled with a congregation of earnest and anxious people. The morning service had almost finished when a series of loud explosions all round the building gave the impression that the town was being bombarded. Distant firing was audible, but the explosions were made by the retiring French, who were blowing up the railway bridges and tunnel and otherwise rendering the railway junction useless to the enemy.

Towards noon the firing became heavier in the river valley. The heat was tropical, and the Territorial infantry, unaccustomed to marching, became exhausted by their exertions. The process of evacuating the town steadily proceeded, but the enemy had to be held in check the while. A brigade of Territorials had fallen out of the fighting line and retreated through the city in a pitiable state ; sweat streamed down the men's faces, many were too exhausted to carry their arms, and sat down by the roadside, many marched barefoot, carrying their boots, some limped along with bleeding feet. Their place was taken by the Senegalese Rifles, who at any rate enjoyed the heat, and evidently enjoyed also the prospect of closing with the enemy. It was a dramatic and also a pathetic sight to see these black troops tramp sturdily through the streets, towering over their French officers who marched at the head of the companies. The crowd looked wistfully at their dusky defenders. Here and there a cheer arose and women waved their handkerchiefs. The colonial soldiers responded by shouts of anticipated triumph, shook their rifles above their heads, and made a gesture with the palms of their hands of cutting the foeman's throat.

Throughout the forenoon of the 31st the Sixth French army had been closing to its right, which stood at Montdidier, its detachments were in touch with our cavalry at Lassigny. Sharp fighting continued during the afternoon, which held the German advanced guards in check, but von Kluck's army as a whole attempted no important enterprise that day. Its commander was evidently puzzled by the unexpected gathering of French troops on his right front, and was unable to decide in what direction to drive home his blow. The headquarters of the French army on the night of the 31st was at St. Just, whence it communicated by motor-car with Sir John French at Compiègne.

On September 1st the Germans occupied Amiens, and pushed strong cavalry detachments towards the coast and towards the railway from Rouen to Paris through Pontoise, but further afield important developments had taken place. The commander of the adventurous First German army now found himself face to face with the hard alternative of abandoning his daring march against the French capital or of risking an unfavourable and even a desperate strategical situation if he were held up in front of Paris and isolated from the main German armies. He had already taken his resolve, which was to march south-eastward in order to take part with the other German armies in the decisive struggle on the Marne or Seine for victory in the open field, and, having regard to the situation as it presented itself to him, there can be no doubt that his choice was prudent and even correct. Probably a leader of the type of Napoleon would have chosen otherwise. He would have risked everything to obtain the paralysing effect upon his enemy of capturing the seat of government, with all it meant to the French nation and to the world.

Retreat of the British

By the evening of August 31st, Sir John French's five infantry divisions had to some extent refitted and recuperated. Much of the regimental baggage had been lost in the retreat, a considerable proportion of the rank and file had been forced by sheer fatigue to abandon their packs and in some cases to throw away their arms. Rested and refreshed, however, our soldiers recovered their aggressive spirit, and throughout the pleasant bivouacs in the magnificent forest of Compiègne the rumour had gone round that retreat was at an end, that it had been merely a local expedient, and that now the Allies were about to resume the offensive along the whole line. Great, therefore, was the disappointment when orders reached the different units during the night that the retreat was to be resumed on the morrow. The early morning of September 1st beheld the brown columns of our troops once more wending their way in column of route, preceded by an immense caravan of vehicles with led horses lame or sore-backed from the excessive exertions of the last ten days, and the inevitable convoys of motor-lorries and ambulances. This time the troops marched in good military order, the cavalry opposed an effectual screen to the enemy's patrols, and the march on the whole was executed under pleasant and favourable conditions.

With the shadow of the enemy's occupation impending over them the inhabitants still found courage to bring fruit and drink to our men, and to assist them in every possible way. The First Army Corps fell back from the valley of the Aisne to Villers-Cotterets, and marched through the forest of that name, where it had some rough encounters with the enemy's advanced troops. The Second Army Corps marched on Crépy and Nanteuil, followed by Allenby's cavalry, who watched the valley of the Oise till our retreating columns were clear of it. The axis of the German advance was now from Clermont, Senlis, Nanteuil, to the valley of the Ourcq, thus interposing between the British and the Sixth French army. His movements were carefully watched by the indefatigable airmen, who had traced the direction of his marching columns through these critical days and nights over a wide expanse of country, and had succeeded in reporting every important movement since the first clash of arms at Mons. The Sixth French army, on the extreme left of the Allied line, conformed to the general disposition of the French armies by falling back on the entrenched camp of Paris in front of the German right column and by the main roads leading to Paris from Beaumont and Clermont. On the night of September 3rd this army lay at St. Denys and the western suburbs of Paris, where it was joined by important reinforcements.

A section of Sir John French's dispatch of September 2nd, 1914, describes the retreat of the British from Compiègne to the Marne:

> "*Retreat from the Aisne to the Marne.*—On September 1st, when retiring from the thickly wooded country to the south of Compiègne, the 1st Cavalry Brigade was overtaken by some German cavalry. They momentarily lost a horse artillery battery, and several officers and men were killed and wounded. With the help, however, of some detachments from the Third

> Corps operating on their left, they not only recovered their own guns but succeeded in capturing twelve of the enemy's.
>
> "Similarly, to the eastward, the First Corps, retiring south, also got into some very difficult forest country, and a somewhat severe rearguard action ensued at Villers-Cotterets, in which the 4th Guards Brigade suffered considerably.
>
> "On September 3rd the British Forces were in position south of the Marne between Lagny and Signy-Signets. Up to this time I had been requested by General Joffre to defend the passages of the river as long as possible, and to blow up the bridges on my front. After I had made the necessary dispositions, and the destruction of the bridges had been effected, I was asked by the French Commander-in-Chief to continue my retirement to a point some twelve miles in rear of the position I then occupied, with a view to taking up a second position behind the Seine. This retirement was duly carried out. In the meantime the enemy had thrown bridges and crossed the Marne in considerable force, and was threatening the Allies all along the line of the British Forces and the Fifth and Ninth French armies. Consequently several small outpost actions took place."

An English trainer who escaped with his wife under the fire of the German guns, leaving all his fine racehorses, goods, and chattels behind, gives the following account:

> "It was on Sunday last, August 30th," he said, "that the firing, which had been coming nearer and nearer La Croix Saint-Ouen, made me hurry into Compiègne to learn what was going on. I was surprised to find Compiègne become the headquarters of the retiring British army. The sight was one of the most extraordinary I have ever seen.
>
> "I was suddenly met by an invasion of all that might be called English. First the motor-vans appeared. All London, Manchester, and Liverpool seemed to be on the roads. English brewery vans and

London motor-'buses, with advertisements still on some of them, led the way. Along came the vans and well-known firms like an avalanche. They raced down the roads, tooted without stopping, and made a deafening noise that echoed all over the forest.

" Provisions, guns, and ammunition were conveyed as fast as they could to the place assigned them in the rear. The drivers seemed to know the roads as if they had been over them every day for years.

" When they reached the place assigned to them they got out, prepared to lie down and sleep on the roadside, and told each other funny stories to while away the time. One of the last who had come into Compiègne had missed his way. Suddenly he came upon a few Germans whom he mistook at first for English soldiers. He looked more closely, and when only within a few hundred yards he recognised his mistake. He instantly wheeled his van round, and before they were able to open fire he was racing down the road as if devils were behind him. ' I got my van away all right and I laughed at their popping at me,' he said.

" After the vans came the soldiers, headed by the 5th Dragoon Guards. They had blown up everything behind them, railway lines and bridges, and it would be some time before the Germans would come up. The soldiers as they reached Compiègne were in the best of spirits. They had been fighting all the time, killing scores of the enemy as they retired through the woods, and losing hardly a man themselves. The French people in all the villages and at Compiègne received them with a hearty welcome.

" When they came to an inn or a *marchand de vin* they were offered any drink in the shop for nothing, or what they liked to give. As a rule the barmen offered them the best wine. The soldiers would smell it, nod their heads as much as to convey ' This is good,' and down it would go. ' Fine drink that,' they would say to each other, and march off again. At Compiègne all the townsfolk came out and exclaimed, ' What fine men, these English!' The fact is the people here, as well as at Chantilly, were accustomed to see, as a rule, only English jockeys and stable lads, of less than average size. They had thereby come to imagine that Englishmen mostly were smaller than the French. When they saw the Dragoons and Lancers and the Scottish troops and Highlanders, they wondered, and were beside themselves with admiration.

"In the shops the English soldiers made it a point to pay for everything they got. Funny scenes were often witnessed. They would select anything they fancied, hold it up in their hands, and ask mutely by a sign 'How much?' Sometimes misunderstandings occurred. Tommy Atkins had not yet had time to master the simplicity of French currency. Two of them were buying bread. One paid for his, and the other laid down the same amount, thinking it was all right. The loaf was much bigger, and the baker tried to explain to him that it was two pounds. 'What,' exclaimed the indignant trooper, 'two pounds for a loaf of bread! You are trying it on,' and out he walked indignantly. Finally, it was explained to him what the baker meant, namely, that it weighed two pounds. The soldier at once asked a pal to return and apologise, and, as he said, 'Pay up and tell the tale.'

"The alarm of the advancing Germans had reached Chantilly. People went from house to house to spread the news. Most of the trainers had already left, and their horses had also been got away. Still about forty or fifty horses remained in the stables. On September 1st the guns were heard at Chantilly. Fighting was then going on around Creil, which the Germans had reached. The English soldiers fell back methodically, eating and sleeping on the roadside, and turning back to have a shot at the enemy. He lent himself easily to this game by coming on in dense columns.

"The soldiers have wonderful tales about the execution done by the Maxim guns. 'We take up a position on the roadside and wait for them to come,' said one of

> them. ‘ When they are 200 or 300 yards away we are eager to fire. “ Wait a bit,” says the captain, “ till I make sure they are not English.” He looks through his field-glasses and then says, “ Let ’em have it, boys ! ” Off it goes, and you see fifty or sixty of them fellows drop. They don’t care ; others come on, and then we move our gun.’
>
> “ This is the kind of fighting that was going on for three days in the forests of Compiègne and Chantilly. They cover about 50,000 acres of ground, and lend themselves wonderfully to small skirmishes. The woods are cut in every direction by lanes and training paths, which were used by the Germans. They even moved their artillery over them ; in fact, they swarmed everywhere. On Tuesday evening, Chantilly was empty.”

Tragedy of Senlis

The forest country on the banks of the Oise, in which the British army rallied on August 28th, is among the most beautiful districts in France, and is still a great sporting centre. In it is situated the old-world town of Senlis, which was a gem of picturesque beauty. It was frequented by Henry IV of France for hunting and other purposes and it was his headquarters at one time during the war with the League, and possesses a crowd of old buildings and a beautiful cathedral church. The houses are surrounded with walled gardens, and the streets are narrow. It is a junction of a number of roads which traverse the neighbouring forest, and commands a wide clearing between the woods to the north and south. As a strong tactical point it was defended with some obstinacy by a French regiment against the advanced guard of the right German column. The German infantry, when they eventually penetrated into the town, were much unnerved by the losses they had sustained, by heat, exhaustion, and by the hidden danger of men shooting at them from behind the garden walls.

They swept through the town and arrested the mayor, an old gentleman with white hair, and several other tradesmen as hostages, while they cleared the outskirts of the French skirmishers who clung to them. The commander of the German regiment which had stormed the place had the hostages brought before him, and savagely threatened them because no arms had been handed over by the civil authorities. The prisoners were then closely confined, and menaced with death if any more shots were fired at the German troops. As might have been expected, this is precisely what happened. The shots might have been fired by some of the population, which included a sprinkling of poachers, or, what is more likely, they might have been fired by French soldiers who still lay concealed in the walled enclosures.

The hostages were immediately brought before a summary court-martial and sentenced to death for not controlling events in the town when they were close prisoners. They were then marched out into the fields, compelled to dig their own graves, and cruelly murdered by a German firing-party. It is the melancholy duty of the historian to record this cowardly and shameful act, which was not the only instance of similar crimes whereby the Germans sullied the honour of their arms after they crossed the French frontier.

Besides murdering the hostages, the German commander ordered the main streets of the town to be burnt. Fortunately the stout old walls were not destructible by fire, but the houses were destroyed and all the property of the unfortunate burghers. Such wanton mischief no doubt contributed to terrorise the inhabitants, but for two centuries it has been regarded as unchivalrous and unsoldierlike. It has set an unfortunate precedent which is not unlikely to be followed if the tide of war should flow over German territory.

One of the first acts of the new French Cabinet was to negotiate a bond between the British, French, and Russian Governments, undertaking to stand by one another in peace and war and not to conclude a separate treaty with the enemy. The text of this bond was published by the British Foreign Office on September 6th, and ran as follows:

> "The British, French, and Russian Governments mutually engage not to conclude peace separately during

the present war. The three Governments agree that when terms of peace come to be discussed no one of the Allies will consider the conditions of peace without the previous agreement of each of the other Allies.

" In faith thereof the undersigned have signed this declaration and have affixed thereto their seals.

" Done in London this fifth day of September, 1914.

"E. GREY,
"*His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.*
" PAUL CAMBON,
"*Ambassador of the French Republic.*
" BENCKENDORFF,
" *Ambassador of H.M. the Emperor of Russia.*"

EXODUS FROM PARIS

The continued retreat of the Allied armies, the advance of the German host into the neighbourhood of the capital, and the widespread legend of their ruthless ferocity, had naturally cast the dark shadow of a tragedy over the French people. The new Governor of Paris had immediately taken the most energetic steps to strengthen the northern front of the fortress, but these very preparations enlightened the inhabitants of their danger, and when it also became known that the seat of the Government was immediately to be transferred to Bordeaux, something like an exodus took place from Paris of all who were able to move. A manly proclamation from President Poincaré announced the decision of the Ministry, and at the same time hurled defiance at the enemy. In spite of dismal forebodings, which were all the more gloomy because of the secrecy hitherto maintained by the Government as to the real military situation, there was no suggestion from any quarter of yielding, and the bond concluded between the great Allied Powers made it clear to all concerned that the war would be fought to a finish.

The scenes in Paris beggared description. A repetition of the siege of 1870 was anticipated by the inhabitants, and the great majority who had the means of moving followed the migration of the Government. Every train which left the Gare de l'Est and the Gare de Lyons was crammed to overflowing. Every motor-car that had not been impressed was filled with passengers and luggage, and an endless caravan of horse-drawn vehicles, foot-passengers, and even wheelbarrows filled all the southward roads out of Paris. The gigantic scale on which this migration took place surpasses anything of the kind that had yet occurred in war. Its incidents irresistibly reminded those who had witnessed it of the stampede from Pekin on its occupation by the Allies during the Boxer Revolt.

The people who remained in Paris, however, remained calm and dignified. Elaborate precautions were taken to protect the public buildings and art museums from bombs and shells, and the more important gems of art in the Louvre and Luxembourg were concealed or removed.

SKIRMISH IN THE FOREST

The British rearguard which had been engaged in the woods of Villers-Cotterets, the 1st Cavalry Brigade, and "L" battery of horse artillery, had a fierce encounter with a superior number of Germans at the village of Néry. Two guns were smashed and two-thirds of the *personnel* of the battery were killed or wounded, but the counter-attack of the cavalry repulsed the Germans and captured two of their batteries. At the same time further east, in the same forest, the enemy succeeded in engaging the 4th Guards Brigade, which had beaten off the German night attack at Landrecies. There was a good deal of hand-to-hand fighting in the woods, which was costly to both sides, and the Irish Guards lost their Colonel and a large number of their officers and men, but the enemy was beaten off, and his pursuit checked. The British army, continuing its retreat, reached the banks of the River Marne on September 3rd, and crossed it by the bridges between Lagny and Meaux. As they retreated our troops continued to destroy the bridges behind them, and on the banks of the Marne they found themselves in touch with the French Fifth army on their right, and the garrison of Paris on their left.

Although the last part of the march had not been seriously molested by the enemy, nevertheless it had been arduous and critical. The noonday sun was fiercely hot, and the nights had begun to be autumnal and cold. The march of these big columns on one road for long stages meant very early starts and late arrivals. Little rest or refreshment could be got in the short nights, many of the regiments had lost their baggage and many of the men their greatcoats; so that although the conditions were far less unfavourable than during the early part of the retreat from the frontier, yet the pressure on our troops was not relaxed, and the alacrity with which they wheeled about and sprang forward directly they received the signal to assume the offensive was in the highest degree creditable to them. The very fact that they now stood in line with the French masses revived their confidence in victory by removing the great anxiety which must necessarily cling to the movements of a small army operating independently, the anxiety lest it should be isolated and overwhelmed by superior numbers while its allies are held in check at a distance.

In mileage alone the retreat of the British army was a remarkable feat of marching. From the battlefield of Mons to the forest of Crécy, south of the Marne, was 140 miles by road, and this distance was covered in eleven days, several of which were interrupted by fierce engagements. The leaders of this army for the first time in their lives had to direct the movements of strong columns in a type of warfare of which the British had no experience since Waterloo. For the soldiers in the ranks the brief sojourn in France had been filled with amazing experiences. The rush across the Channel, and the enthusiastic reception by the inhabitants of the towns in Northern France, the march straight on to the battlefield after the short railway journey which took them to the frontier, a series of sanguinary battles alternating with long marches across the fertile plains and shady forests on the banks of the Oise, strange food, strange wine, strange language, and kaleidoscopic change of scenery each day, while they may well have bewildered the rank and file, yet undoubtedly contributed to keep up their spirits and excite their interest. It is certain, too, that the rivalry in arms of the Allied Forces proved a most powerful incentive to the valour of our troops, while their cheery self-confidence and steady discipline worked wonders in sustaining the courage of the French, for belief in ultimate victory is contagious.

It is time now to consider the movements of the great German host and the reasons which induced its leaders to abandon their advance. As we have seen, the campaign opened by a great offensive movement of the French armies directed against the German Forces assembled in the Ardennes and on the eastern bank of the Meuse. The Fifth German army, commanded by the Crown Prince, having defeated the French on the frontier at the battle of Longwy, threw its right wing over the Meuse below Verdun and advanced in two masses up the river so as to attack Verdun on the eastern bank and to drive the Third French army southwards through the Argonne as far as Vaubecourt. The Fourth German army, led by the Duke of Würtemberg, having defeated the French on the river Semois, and again on the Meuse at Sedan, had marched southward, in touch with the Crown Prince's army on the left, as far as Châlons. The Third Saxon army, directed against Rheims and Épernay, had reached the Marne, to find itself checked by superior Forces of the French. There was a gap between the line of advance of the Saxon army and the Second German army, commanded by von Bülow, which included the Prussian Guard and Hanoverian Corps, and another gap between the Second and First German army under von Kluck, whose adventures had stretched its marching columns out as far west as Amiens and Beauvais. A general concentration of the German line now took place in Champagne, which entailed a long march for the First army, while hard fighting took place with the French right and centre.

The German armies had now advanced 100 miles from their railhead. Maubeuge still blocked the main line from Cologne, Liége, Namur, along the Oise to Paris; the other main line, from Mainz through Metz into France, was blocked at Verdun, so that 1,200,000 German troops depended for their supplies and ammunition on the railway which ascends the Meuse from Namur to Mézières and thence through Rethel to Rheims, supplemented by the prodigious activity of their motor transport. Even the one line of railway of which they had command on French territory was not entirely in working order owing to the destruction of the bridges by the retreating French, which were hastily repaired by German pioneers.

This line of communication was altogether insufficient for such vast Forces, and for such a lavish expenditure of ammunition as contemporary fighting demanded. Nothing but the prospect of an absolutely decisive victory rapidly obtained over the main French armies would have justified a lengthening of these communications, but the accession of strength to the French line by the arrival in line of the Sixth and Ninth armies, and by the French retreat towards the centre of their resources, had already diminished the prospect of such a victory ; moreover, the fighting which took place in the first week of September on the uplands of Champagne conclusively showed that the German superiority in the field had vanished and could not be recovered without strong reinforcements. No such reinforcements were at hand, but on the contrary some detachment had to be made from the western army to the Russian frontier, where a very serious situation was rapidly developing.

The march of von Kluck's army from Senlis to the banks of the Marne was an operation called in military phraseology a flank march—a march, that is, which exposes its flank to hostile attack. It was justified in the present case by the presumption that the armies composing the Allied left wing had been so severely handled, and had suffered such material loss in their retreat from the frontier, that they would be incapable of an energetic offensive. But the operation always entails great inconveniences and difficulties, not the least of which depend on the fact that the direction of the march is different to the fighting front, and that consequently a turning and sometimes even a crossing of marching columns are unavoidable. Even on a small scale this operation involves risks and disadvantages, but when five army corps have to be directed obliquely across the enemy's front and then formed in a new line almost parallel with the direction of their march, the operation becomes one of extreme delicacy and hardihood. The First German army, however, having lost contact with the retreating British, and having shaken off the Sixth French army from its right flank, was successful in executing the march from the valley of the Oise to the banks of the Ourcq, a tributary which flows into the Marne just above Meaux. Thus the German armies effected their junction, from which point the German Command had purposed to resume the offensive against the Allies on a decisive scale.

Two principal circumstances frustrated this intention. In the first place, early notice of this flank march had been conveyed to the British headquarters and of von Kluck's changed direction by the accurate work of our airmen; in the second place, the advance of the German centre and left had encountered increasing and more successful resistance in the plains of Châlons and in the country between the Marne and the Aube. The Fifth, the Crown Prince's army, too, had been split into two wings by the fortress of Verdun, held by a numerous and active garrison which had to be blockaded; this army consequently lost its momentum for attack, and the whole German host, partly by reason of its own size and weight, which entailed suffering and losses during its rapid inroad through Champagne, no longer seemed to possess the material and moral power for the decisive victory demanded by German strategy. Had the Allies been intimidated by the threat to their left flank in von Kluck's march from the Oise to the Ourcq, this object might have been attained. The resolution, however, of the French headquarters immediately to pass to the offensive with the whole Allied strength, which was arrived at on the evening of September 4th, completely baffled the German plan of campaign. The German leaders probably displayed a wise discretion in recognising the unfavourable turn events had taken, before they launched their troops forward in a general attack; they were thus enabled to elude the shrewdest blows of the Allied commanders by tenacious rearguard actions, and by a timely retreat to strong positions on the line of the River Aisne.

All marches of large forces entail losses of *personnel*, but such a retreat as the Germans were now compelled to effect was of necessity extremely costly in men and material. The material loss, however, was as nothing to the moral disadvantage of being compelled to abandon their advance, and of being thrown on the defensive, and this is particularly true when the character of their French adversary is borne in mind. The manner in which the losses sustained by the British Expeditionary Force have been furnished to the public has purposely obscured the times and places at which they were sustained. If Sir John French's army before September 3rd be reckoned at 100,000 men of all arms, it appears that in prisoners, killed, and wounded he lost from one-fourth to one-third of his strength before that date. These losses were replaced about this time by drafts from the depots in England, and his Third Army Corps was completed by the dispatch of the 6th Division of the original Expeditionary Force, which the Government was at length able to place in the field, having apparently improvised its transport and administrative services after the outbreak of war.

The French Government published no statement whatever as to their losses in the field. The German Government, on the other hand, has from time to time published precise lists of casualties, but without intimating the time and place where the losses were sustained. Only the roughest estimate, therefore, can be made of the extent to which their strength was diminished in France during the first month of the war. It is, however, possible to affirm that the muster-rolls of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth armies were diminished by 200,000 men, and this calculation is probably short of the mark.

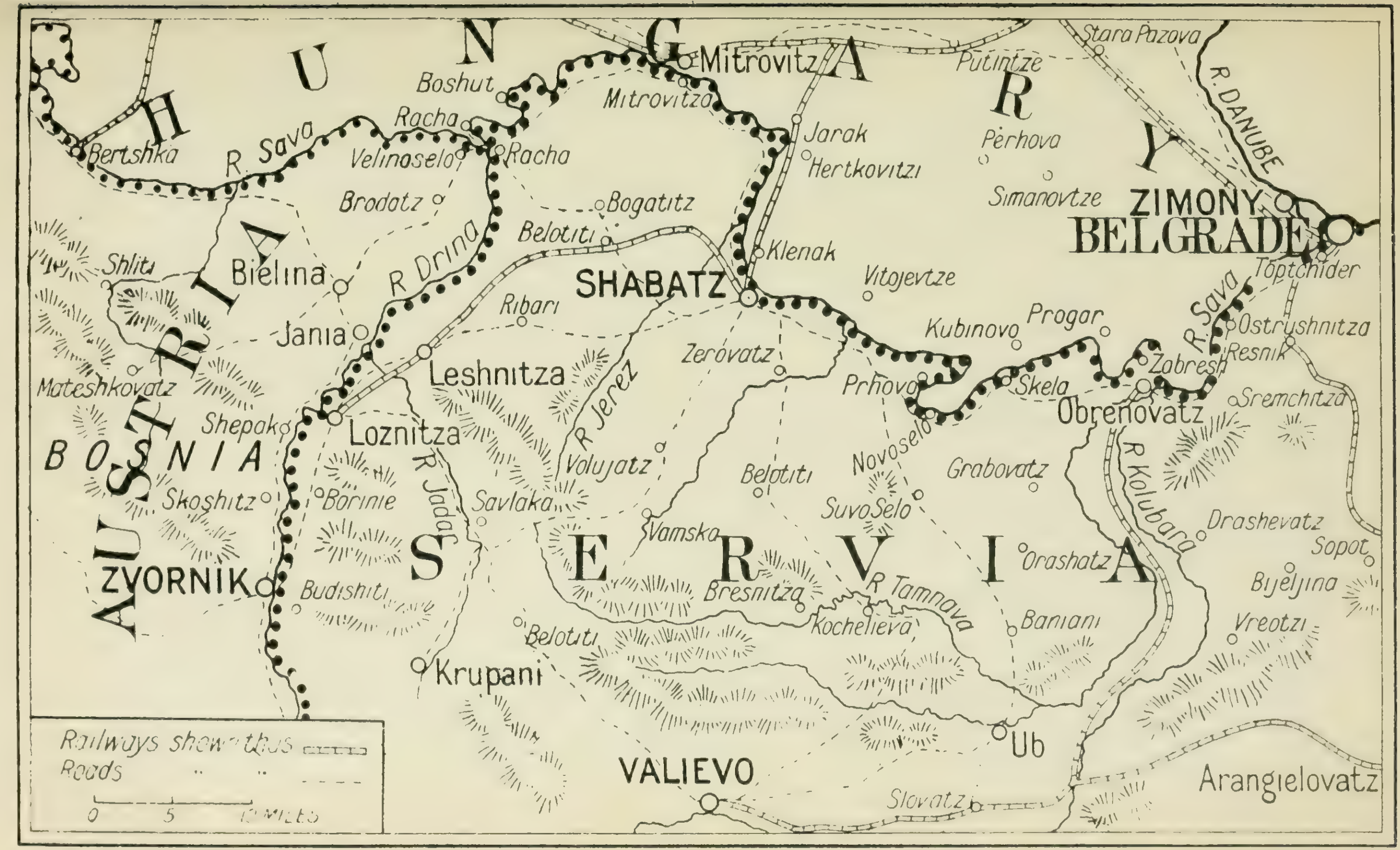
The directing staff of all European armies is similarly constituted, and in a campaign each important unit keeps a war-diary which records the principal operations and the share of any particular unit in some detail. It is the business of the administrative staff to keep a watchful eye upon the muster-rolls and to register the losses in men and material from day to day. Sometimes, however, the pressure of events makes it impossible to execute these duties with care, but in a general way the collation and comparison of the staff diaries of an army reflect the principal events of a campaign and the part played in it by any particular division. Without access to these diaries only a bird's-eye view of the course of the war can be obtained, but the historical section of the General Staff, after a lapse of time and by careful comparison of accounts, can piece together the principal events that have taken place. On the basis of this historical work the rulers of Germany have set the fashion for founding all theoretical and tactical instruction. It represents the accumulated experience of modern war, and can never be replaced by the most brilliant intuition ; but while a very accurate and detailed record is required for military purposes, which it is impossible to produce or publish till after a considerable lapse of time, yet a narrative which gives the principal events in outline must satisfy the general reader until such time as the actors in the drama are able to narrate their individual experiences.

The combined advance of the five German armies to the valley of the Marne constituted a vast military operation. No newspaper correspondents were present with the French armies, and although some were present with the Germans, the accounts which they have published are far from satisfactory. Most—probably all—of the men capable of writing such accounts were on military duty.

After the German victories on the frontier, and their victorious passage over the Meuse, the resistance of the line of French armies was renewed in the valley of the Aisne on August 31st, but there had been vicissitudes in the general struggle. At several points the French had gained important local successes, and at each one of the great battles on the frontier the Germans had paid very dearly for their triumph. The Crown Prince's army had had severe fighting between Longwy and Verdun in a series of actions known to the French as the battle of Spincourt. Throughout their advance southward through the defiles of the Argonne they met with fierce and increasing resistance. The left wing of the Fifth army, operating on the east bank of the Meuse, had failed to gain any advantage over the garrison of Verdun, in spite of a brave attempt to capture their advanced trenches so as to bring the German heavy artillery within range of the fortress, while the French army pivoting on Nancy not only held its ground, but had dealt some heavy offensive strokes at the Bavarians on its front. The Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth army had been severely engaged on the line Château Porcien-Rethel on the River Aisne on August 31st, and throughout the retirement of the vast French host no opportunity had been lost for striking back at the German advanced guards, and several not inconsiderable successes had been achieved in the process, notably the action at Guise, when pressure was taken off the retreat of the British.

The outflanking movement of the First German army under von Kluck compelled the general French line to retire, otherwise the balance of gain and loss in the fighting on French territory would not have been so unfavourable for the defending side. The following is the *résumé* of these operations published by the French Government on August 31st :

> " 1. *Vosges and Lorraine.*—Our Forces which took the offensive in the Vosges and in Lorraine at the beginning of operations, and which repulsed the enemy over our frontiers, subsequently suffered serious checks before Sarrebourg and in the region of Morhange, where they came into collision with strongly fortified positions. Our Forces were compelled to retire in order to refit, in part towards the hills east of Nancy, partly in the French Vosges. The Germans then passed to the offensive, but our troops, having repulsed the enemy from the positions in which they had rallied themselves, resumed the attack after two days. This new offensive has continued to progress, but slowly. The war in this region has become a regular siege. Every position which is occupied is immediately entrenched by one side or the other, and it is this fact which explains the delay in our advance; nevertheless local successes are being daily obtained.
>
> " 2. *In the region of Nancy and the Woevre.*—Since the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BOSNIA
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R. DANUBE
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Bogatitz
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Shliti
Jania
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Grabovatz
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ALEXANDER GROSS F.R.G.S

beginning of the campaign this region, comprised between the fortress of Metz on the German side and the fortresses of Toul and Verdun on the French side, has not been the theatre of any important operation.

"3. *The Meuse between Verdun and Mézières.*—It will be remembered that the French Forces originally took the offensive in the direction of Longwy, Neufchâteau, and Givet. The troops operating in the region of Spincourt and Longuyon have inflicted a check upon the Crown Prince's army. In the regions of Neufchâteau and Givet, on the contrary, certain of our troops have suffered partial defeat, which has compelled them to fall back on the Meuse without, however, dislocating their main body.

"This retreat compelled the Forces operating in the neighbourhood of Spincourt also to withdraw towards the Meuse.

"Finally, the enemy attempted to cross the Meuse with considerable Forces; but a vigorous counter-offensive on our part threw his troops into the river after having suffered heavy losses; nevertheless, fresh German troops advanced in the region of Rocroy, marching in the direction of Rethel. At this very moment a general action is taking place in the region comprised between the Meuse and Rethel, and it is impossible as yet to foresee the definite result.

"4. *Operations in the North.*—The Anglo-French Forces originally advanced as far as the region of Dinant, Charleroi, and Mons. After enduring several partial checks, the forcing of the passage over the Meuse by the Germans on our flank compelled our troops to retire. The Germans were continually trying to outflank us on the west. Under these circumstances our Allies the English, attacked by an enemy with very superior numbers in the region of Le Cateau and Cambrai, were compelled to withdraw towards the south, at the same time as our Forces were operating on their right. The retreat was continued during the following days. Nevertheless a general battle was fought the day before

> yesterday in the region of Ham-Péronne. This battle was the scene of an important success on our right, when we drove the Prussian Guard and the Tenth army corps over the Oise. On the other hand, owing to the continual progress of the German right wing, where the enemy had concentrated their best army corps, we have been compelled to continue our retirement.
>
> " To sum up, on the right, after several partial checks, we have taken the offensive, and the enemy is falling back before us. In the centre we have had alternate success and failure, but the general struggle continues. On our left, by a series of circumstances which have favoured the Germans and in spite of several successful counter-attacks, the Anglo-French Forces have been compelled to yield ground. At no point have our armies been really shattered, in spite of checks which cannot be denied. The moral state of our troops continues to be excellent in spite of the considerable losses they have suffered, and which we have been able to replace from the depots."

A later official telegram was issued by the Government in Paris on August 31st, which stated that the general situation had only been modified on the wings. On the Allied left the Germans continued to gain ground. In the centre there had been no important incident, and in Lorraine the French had the advantage.

The baldness of this official narrative was partly intentional, and due in part to the meagreness of official knowledge. The generals commanding in the field and their staffs, many of whom were killed in the sanguinary actions at the beginning of the war, were overworked, harassed, and anxious. They had little time, even if they had had the wish, to keep their civilian colleagues well informed as to the movements of troops and the vicissitudes of the great struggle. Moreover, even the generals in the field were only partially aware of what was taking place. Events succeeded one another with such startling rapidity, and the area of the contest was so great, so much of it was fought in forests and hills, that a mental picture of the whole arena was excessively difficult to obtain at any one moment. The continued retreat of the French Forces, as pointed out by the official communication, was due from day to day to some salient and compelling military event, such as the outflanking of the whole Allied line by the successful advance of the First German army. In the same way, the happy resolution of the French Commander-in-Chief to abandon the defensive rôle when he received the welcome tidings that the First German army had changed the direction of its march, was founded upon the general impression conveyed by the French army commanders that the German offensive was weakening to an important degree, while the outflanking movement of von Kluck's army ceased to be a menace. In the imperfect state of their knowledge General Joffre's resolution to attack the Germans was a bold one, involving considerable risks had his information turned out to be incorrect. The Commander-in-Chief of such an extended line of battle sees nothing of the operations with his own eyes, but is dependent on messages conveyed by telegraph and telephone to a central point probably some twenty miles in rear of the general line of battle, and it is by careful comparison and consideration of these reports that he forms his mental picture of the military situation at any given moment, and founds his plans for the future.

In the ranks of the German Army the continued advance had generated a most supreme confidence. On August 30th an officer on the General Staff of the Crown Prince wrote to his wife from Vaubecourt on the Meuse:

> "Our march into France has been a triumphal progress, and a series of victories. From this point we shall never retire. In front of us lies final victory, and behind us only death."

A week later the whole chain of German army corps was recoiling in its rearward movement to their defensive position on the Aisne.

CHAPTER IX

THE WAR IN POLAND

The war which is desolating Europe could never have assumed its gigantic dimensions by any single cause of quarrel. The westward pressure of the Slavs towards the Germanic Empires and the Balkans, the westward pressure of the Germans into Belgium and France, and their maritime rivalry with England, produced a complication of rivalries which have dragged all the great Powers of Europe into the maelstrom of the present conflict. Ever since the invasion of Russia in 1812 by a great army of French and Germans, led by the most renowned soldier of modern times, came disastrously to grief in the vast plains of Russia, the might of the northern empire has been something like an obsession to the inhabitants of Central Europe. The quarrel between Russia and Austria for a predominant position in Balkan politics started the ball rolling, but fear, and fear alone, could have armed the masses of the population of Central Europe with the desperate energy which they have displayed in this war.

Owing to distance, and to the internal condition of Russia, its people and their social customs are not known or appreciated even by their nearest neighbours. The Germans have prided themselves on their contempt for Russian backwardness in what they are pleased to call "Kultur," and the Russians are not behind them in dislike for the characteristics of their neighbours. The Germans lack the sense of humour, the good humour, charity, and broadminded toleration for the feelings and the opinions of others which is common to all Russian society. The Russians loathe the method, the precise organisation, and strict discipline of German life even more than the Germans hate the easy-going and somewhat slipshod methods that have been attributed to the Muscovite character. It is impossible to imagine two nations whose salient characteristics present a broader contrast or who are less fitted to appreciate the good points of the other.

For many a long year dynastic policy, fear of one another's strength, and an absence of direct conflict between the interests of the two empires kept the peace between Germany and Russia, but for nearly a century the people of the two countries have looked at one another askance. It has long been foreseen by students of Continental politics that an armed struggle between the Teutons and Slavs was sure to occur in the near future.

Actually the news of the mobilisation of the Russian Army precipitated matters in Berlin in those last days of July 1914, when the Kaiser's Government dispatched its peremptory demand for disarmament to Petrograd and Paris. As we have seen, the plan of the German military chiefs reckoned on the tardy mobilisation and assembly of the Russian armies, and counted confidently on their power to ruin the first line of the French Army, which lay within reach of the mass of the German Forces, before the hosts of the Tsar could join in the conflict. Moreover, it was also anticipated that the Austrian Forces, assisted by a strong group of Prussians on the frontiers of Poland, would be able to check any enterprise of the Russian Army for at least two months. Either the German General Staff was very badly informed, or else its miscalculations were considerable. The Austrian Forces, assembled in two great groups of which the right had Lemberg in Eastern Galicia for its advanced base, and the left pivoted upon Jaroslav in Austrian Poland, at a very early period of the war were found to be inferior to the Russian Forces which were brought against them, while the Russian preparations for carrying the war into Prussian territory soon compelled the German General Staff to modify the most important of their dispositions, in order to defend the vitals of the German Empire itself.

In the present work it is only possible to give a bare outline of the gigantic campaign waged on each side with several millions of soldiers, and whose battle-line has extended from the Baltic to the Carpathians. So much of the narrative of these operations, however, is essential to the understanding of the equally gigantic contest waged in Western Europe between the armies of Germany and the Allied Forces of France and England.

On August 1st Germany declared war against Russia, nominally in defence of her ally, Austria-Hungary. It was not, however, until August 5th that Austria-Hungary issued her declaration of war against Russia. The object of the Austrians was to gain as much time as possible in order to carry through their attack upon Serbia. It is beyond the scope of this work to narrate in detail the difficult operations of the army which attacked Serbia and defended Bosnia. The Serbian territory projects into the Austrian in the same way that Poland forms a bastion of Slavism in the north. The southern kingdom, however, is guarded on the north by the course of the Danube and on the west by the tangled mountains and ravines of the Bosnian Alps. The Austrians stood on the defensive north of the Danube, and concentrated considerable Forces in Bosnia, which came to blows with the Serbians in a number of desultory fights in the second week in August. On August 16th the Austrians stormed the Serbian position on the River Drina, and repulsed their counter-attacks, which the Austrians admit to have been pushed with courage and persistence. On August 19th severe fighting took place between the main body of the Serbian troops and the Austrian Expeditionary Force. Both sides sustained heavy losses without gaining decisive victory. The struggle was called the battle of Shabatz, and ended in the Austrian Forces withdrawing to their own territory.

While the fighting took place on the Bosnian frontier the Montenegrins were held in check by a division detached to contain them, while up and down the Danube Austrian monitors bombarded Belgrade and other places on the Serbian shore. A desultory and indecisive campaign followed, which certainly inflicted destructive loss on the Serbians, but the Austrian Army, weakened by the withdrawal of the first-line divisions to the seat of war in Galicia, was never able to maintain its possession of any considerable portion of Serbian territory, and the Austrian attack degenerated into a series of raids which hammered the Serbian Forces, and laid waste the country, but failed to establish an absolute ascendency. The only attempt on an adequate scale to overrun Serbia, later on in the war, dismally failed, partly owing to the severity of the winter in the mountains, but principally owing to the impossibility of supplying large Forces with stores and ammunition along the tracts which do duty as roads in Serbia. The general effect of these operations was to retain two Austrian corps, the Fifteenth and Sixteenth, in Bosnia, and a varying number of Landwehr and Landsturm divisions along the Danube and Save, so that in the duel with Russia the Austrian Army was permanently weakened by not less than four army corps.

The plan concerted between the German and Austrian General Staff consisted in a rapid offensive against the Russian troops defending Poland simultaneously from Silesia and Western Galicia, while the Prussian Forces in East Prussia held the Russian troops assembling on the Niemen in check, and the Austrian army assembling in Eastern Galicia stood on the defensive against the group of Russian army corps whose headquarters was Kieff. The centres of the zone of assembly of the two Austrian armies are sixty miles apart, and the principal defect of the Austrian situation consisted in this. The greater the distance their attacking army marched into Poland, the greater the interval between the two Austrian groups. On the Prussian side, however, the Germanic Forces enjoyed some special advantages over the Russians which went far to compensate for their numerical inferiority at the beginning of the war. Not only are the marches of Eastern Prussia sparsely populated and covered with forest, but a belt of lakes, wide and deep, with muddy swamps in between, form a barrier which can be defended by relatively few troops.

On the German side of the frontier a magnificent network of roads and railways facilitates the rapid movement of troops in every direction on Prussian soil, but both in Russian Poland and in the government of Vilna all the communications are very defective. With few exceptions Russian roads are not metalled, they are but sandy tracks in the forest. In consequence of these topographical conditions, an offensive policy with large Forces is an extremely difficult problem for either side. The Prussians could multiply their Forces by rapid lateral movements, and use the screen of the lakes to economise their troops, so that the Russian Forces which invaded East Prussia soon found themselves separated and out-manœuvred; on the other hand, when the Prussian army crossed the frontier into Russia, it soon experienced insurmountable difficulties owing to the extreme difficulty of bringing up ammunition and supplies, and of moving artillery and motor-cars on the Polish roads.

The frontiers both of Prussia and Russia are also defended by an elaborate system of artificial fortifications. In East Prussia, Königsberg and Dantzig on the coast are strong places, while Thorn and Graudenz bestride the Vistula with a girdle of forts. On the Russian side the fortress of Kovno on the Niemen bars the main railway line from Berlin to Petrograd. Higher up the river the fortress of Grodno bars the railway from Warsaw to Petrograd. Along the frontier the smaller fortresses of Ossowiec, Lomza, Ostrolenka, and Pultusk stand opposite the Masurian lake district. The bridgeheads over the Vistula in Poland are strongly fortified at Warsaw, Ivangorod, and Novogeorgevitch, and behind this fortress system stands the large entrenched camp of Brestlitewski.

On the Austrian frontier, however, the difficulties which beset military operations on a great scale were not so great. The country does not bristle with fortresses, nor are the features of the land so unfavourable to the movements of armies until the region of the Carpathian Mountains is reached. The Austrians had intended to defend Lemberg, the chief town of Galicia, but had failed to bring its defences up to date, so that it was impotent to resist the Russian heavy artillery. The other Austrian fortresses north of the Carpathians are Przemysl and Cracow. Immense quantities of food and stores had been collected at Lemberg, and since the Austrians were well aware of the destructive use of heavy howitzers it is incomprehensible that they should not have surrounded the place with adequate fortifications during the years between 1908 and 1914, with war continually threatening, and their Forces in Galicia in a chronic state of semi-mobilisation. The neglect of the Austrian Government to take this obvious precaution cost the Germanic alliance very dear indeed.

Both Austria and Russia disposed of very large Forces of cavalry permanently maintained on a war strength. Fighting began between the opposing cavalry troops immediately after the declaration of war. The Russian cavalry, which ere long amounted to a score of divisions, each of twenty-four squadrons, on the enemy's frontier was not able to effect much against the Germans, because of the difficult nature of the country, the elaborate preparations for defence, and the clever distribution of third-line troops who, with their machine-guns, were posted in such a manner as to be able to fire upon the Russian horsemen from positions where they could not be charged. As against the Austrians, however, the Russians achieved more success, particularly in Eastern Galicia, where their numbers preponderated. But soon something like a balance was established along the frontier, and behind the screens of the cavalry divisions with their infantry detachments the mobilisation and assembly of the contending armies proceeded swiftly, smoothly, and secretly.

Between Russia and the Germanic Allies a race began as to which side should most rapidly assemble superior strength. The Germans had probably but four or at most five first-line army corps to begin the campaign. The Austrians assembled seven army corps to constitute their First army, under General von Dankl, between the Rivers San and Vistula. The Second Austrian army, commanded by General von Auffenberg, consisted at first of only three infantry corps, but was very strong in cavalry. This group was expected to act as a delaying Force, and it was hoped in Vienna that time would permit of its being reinforced before the Russians could cross the frontier in force. On the Russian side the army of Vilna consisted of four army corps. Each Russian army corps consists of thirty-two battalions, while the German corps consist of only twenty-four. In Poland five army corps had their headquarters, and behind these two armies on the frontier there were also four army corps in the military province of Petrograd and five in the military province of Moscow. All these troops were moved up to the frontier to reinforce the Russian line much earlier than had been anticipated in Berlin, but the first collisions were borne by the armies of Vilna and Warsaw. In the military government of Kieff there were five army corps, and two in that of Odessa, which were ready to invade Galicia in the fourth week in August. From further east three more army corps were available to reinforce this army a month after the declaration of war. Not only, therefore, was the right-hand group of Germanic Forces outnumbered by nearly two to one, but it had no hope of bringing up second-line troops to make good the balance any quicker than the Russians. Four army corps which had been left on the frontiers of Serbia and Italy were relieved by Landwehr as soon as possible and transferred by rail to Galicia.

The Austrian First army was only opposed by the Warsaw army, which was forced to make a considerable detachment to meet the Prussian Forces collecting on the southern frontier of East Prussia, and until the Moscow group of army corps came up into line the Austrians enjoyed numerical superiority. They promptly utilised their advantage by taking the offensive on the right bank of the Vistula. On August 23rd the first battle between the Austrians and the Russians was fought at Krasnik, one day's march across the frontier in the direction of Lublin. In this battle the Austrians gained a victory over two Russian corps, and captured a large number of prisoners and some artillery. The Austrians then pushed forward as far as the town of Lublin, thirty miles from the fortress of Ivangorod on the Vistula. Here they cut the line from Warsaw to Kieff and threatened the communications between Warsaw and the reserve armies of Moscow and Petrograd. But ninety miles now separated the headquarters of the two Austrian armies, and vast Russian Forces were rapidly assembling, which made the situation of the Austrian army on the right bank of the Vistula in the highest degree precarious, so that it was compelled to retreat towards the Austrian frontier and its enterprise was reduced to the dimensions of a great raid and no more.

Battle of Krasnik

The following is the Austrian account of the battle of Krasnik: The Russian army-group which composed the right wing of the Russian army invading Galicia was composed of four army corps of the Warsaw district, and later of a fifth. The advanced guard of this group, consisting of two army corps, had been pushed forward to watch the forest of Krasnik. The Austrians began the campaign by a successful surprise attack executed on August 23rd, after a skilfully directed concentration concealed by the woods. The Russian advanced corps were isolated and overthrown in great confusion. They lost 3,000 prisoners, three standards, twenty guns, and seven machine-guns, and fell back on their main body. The conflict was renewed on August 24th and 25th, but ended in the retreat of the whole Russian army northwards of Lublin.

While Austria and Russia were straining every nerve to anticipate one another by assembling superior Forces on the frontiers of Galicia, another campaign on an important scale had already been initiated between the Russians and the defenders of East Prussia. The thorny character of the Prussian territory which lay within the reach of the first Russian strokes actually prevented the inroad of any Forces but a large army. The Vilna group of Russian army corps were, however, ready to move within a week of the declaration of war, and, forming two principal columns of attack, they advanced from the Niemen north-westwards, and from the banks of the River Narew northwards, with the intention of overrunning East Prussia and investing Königsberg. The movements of these two columns were not rapid, owing to the obstacles which confronted them, but on August 16th they came into contact with a German army corps and inflicted on it a sharp reverse. The defeated Prussian troops retreated into the entrenched camp of Königsberg. This fight took place at Gumbinnen on the main railway, and the Russians narrowly missed intercepting the defeated troops by their movement from the south.

The Russian army on the Niemen was commanded by General Rennenkampf, who had distinguished himself in Manchuria as a cavalry leader. The Russian army on the Narew was commanded by General Samsonoff, also a cavalry officer, who had won great distinction in the battle of Liao Yang. The southern army struck at the Twentieth German Corps, which had taken up a defensive position south-east of Königsberg. Skirmishing took place on the 20th, and on the morning of the 21st the German right was turned, and their position was stormed. This army corps likewise retreated in haste towards Königsberg, and the Russians captured large numbers of prisoners and guns, so that the situation in East Prussia was very dark for the Germans at this date, and it is remarkable that this is the one point in the two vast theatres of war where the tide of victory flowed strongly against them at the beginning.

The Russian army now coming up into line in Galicia, to support the Warsaw group, was commanded by General Russky ; he had used the railway through Rovno and Dudno to the frontier at Brody. His army, consisting of 200,000 troops, threatened to penetrate between the First Austrian army, operating on the left bank of the River Bug between Zamosc and Lublin, and the Second Austrian army, defending the line to Lemberg from Kieff and Odessa. On Russky's left yet another Russian army, commanded by General Brussiloff, had come into contact with the Second Austrian army on August 23rd, and began to push it back from its advanced position on the River Sereth towards Lemberg. Brussiloff's army was composed of 150,000 troops, and was by itself not inferior in strength to von Auffenberg's Second Austrian army. Owing, therefore, to the unexpectedly rapid mobilisation and assembly of the Russian Forces, the position of the Germanic hosts in the eastern seat of war was already unfavourable at the very moment when Germany opened the campaign so brilliantly in the west. By a freak of fortune the first Austrian battle at Krasnik was a considerable victory, and the first Prussian fights at Gumbinnen and Frankenau were considerable defeats. A few days later the situation was destined to be dramatically reversed in both districts. The Prussians succeeded in inflicting a destructive defeat on the Russian northern army, and the Russians, on the other hand, completely turned the tables on the Austrians, compelled their First army to retreat on to Austrian soil, and to lose large numbers of men by forced marches, in a vain attempt to succour the Second Austrian army. The latter was severely defeated east of Lemberg, and it was unable to defend the place in spite of the reinforcements which it had received of three army corps from the south. So that the retreat of the two Austrian armies converged on the entrenched camp of Przemysl, and thence to the foot-hills of the Carpathians, where they were compelled to stand on the defensive throughout the winter against the persistent attack of the Russian armies.

Marshal von Hindenburg

The reconquest of East Prussia was accomplished by the brilliant leadership of one who is commonly said to be the greatest general which the war has so far produced. Paul von Hindenburg was born in 1847, and served in the 3rd Regiment of Guards in the campaign of 1866 and in the war of 1870, where he fought at St. Privat and the siege of Paris. From 1873 to 1876 he studied at the Kriegsacademie, which was professedly the model for our Staff College. In 1877 he joined the General Staff for seven years. In 1885 he was again appointed to the General Staff as a major in the Third Army Corps. He became Regimental Commander in 1893, and Chief of the General Staff of the Eighth Army Corps in 1896, a general of brigade in 1897, and general of a division at Carlsruhe in 1900. When the war broke out he was in retirement at Hanover, but as soon as the situation became critical on the eastern frontier the Chief of Staff remembered the skill von Hindenburg had displayed in manœuvres among the Masurian Lakes and his exact knowledge of the intricate topography of the Russian border. For von Hindenburg had made the defence of this frontier his special study. It is said that when a commercial company had been formed in Berlin with the object of draining the lakes and restoring the land for agriculture, and had gone within an ace of obtaining Imperial sanction for their promising enterprise, it was von Hindenburg's remonstrances in the highest quarter which had preserved this bulwark of forest, marsh, and lake for the defence of the old Prussian domain.

After the disasters which flung the defeated Prussian corps back into Königsberg, von Hindenburg hurried to his post with reinforcements composed of such reserve divisions as were ready at hand. These Forces amounted to no more than three army corps. The Twentieth Corps was left to defend Königsberg, the First had been brought round by sea to Dantzig and added to von Hindenburg's command. Cleverly utilising the railways and the forests to conceal his dispositions from the numerous aircraft of the enemy, the Prussian commander succeeded in interposing his left wing on the railway from Allenstein to Osterode, where he also succeeded in holding up Samsonoff's army, marching westward to seize the passages of the Vistula on a broad front. The long columns of Samsonoff's right and centre were successfully held in check, while his left was surprised by a fierce attack from the First Army Corps and a reserve division in the tangled country south of Hohenstein.

Battle of Tannenberg

Close to a village near Tannenberg two Russian army corps were pinned up against the lake and almost destroyed; at the same time the remaining three were completely wrecked in their desperate attempts to extricate themselves from the German enveloping attack. The fighting, which is called by the Germans the battle of Tannenberg, took place between August 26th and September 1st. It resulted in the capture of 70,000 Russian prisoners and some 500 guns. The victory was gained to a large extent by the use on a gigantic scale of motor-cars and 'buses, which rendered possible the rapid movement of the German regiments in reinforcing certain portions of the line. The Russian retreat from their base at Mlawa was completely severed by the Prussian right, and the retreating fragments of Samsonoff's army were driven eastward through Ortelsburg, to seek shelter behind the Russian frontier fortresses of Ostrolenka, Lomza, and Ossovicz.

Detaching his First Corps to pursue what remained of Samsonoff's army, Hindenburg then immediately marched against Rennenkampf, who in the meanwhile had prepared to invest Königsberg; but the Russian general promptly abandoned the siege and retreated as rapidly as possible towards the Niemen. He had got clear of Insterberg before the Prussian pursuers came in touch with his troops and fought a rearguard action with them on his first battlefield at Gumbinnen. Rennenkampf, having regained Russian territory without disaster, fell back towards the line of the Niemen. Hindenburg then crossed the frontier and established himself in the Russian towns of Suwalki and Augustowo, pushing before him the Russian reinforcements, which now began to reach the area of the conflict, towards the fortress of Grobno on the Niemen. His exhausted troops suffered considerably in the forest fighting, where the local conditions and sandy roads no longer favoured their rapid movement.

The Russian invasion of East Prussia, which was thus disastrously defeated, produced, however, an important influence on the general situation at the very time when the fortunes of the Allies were at their lowest ebb. The villages through which they had passed, largely built of wood, were in many cases burned by the advancing or retreating adversaries, a circumstance which gave colour to the stories officially circulated by the German Government of Russian atrocities in the province. A great crowd of fugitives pressed inland from all parts of the frontier region, and penetrated as far as Berlin itself, carrying alarm and despondency along with them. The invaded province, moreover, was the most ancient possession of the Prussian Crown, and the stronghold of the old Prussian military aristocracy and squirearchy;

as King of Prussia, the Emperor possessed a large estate there, and was in the habit of spending some time each autumn at his castle, which fell into the hands of the Russians. The immediate and striking effect of the hostile occupation of this large tract of Prussian territory and the approach of considerable invading Forces to within 120 miles of Berlin, was not lost upon the Russian strategists, who perceived that an invasion of the vitals of the Germanic Empires was necessary to victory in the war. The relief and triumph in Germany at the news of Hindenburg's brilliant victory corresponded with the alarm produced by the raid of the two Russian armies, and enabled them to bear with fortitude and philosophy the less pleasing intelligence of the catastrophe which overtook their allies almost at the same date in Eastern Galicia.

When the Russians invaded Eastern Galicia they found the Ruthenian population friendly, and in several instances bodies of Austrian troops recruited from this and other Slav races either fought in a very half-hearted way or refused to fight at all for the Dual Monarchy. It is difficult to say on which side the balance of Polish sympathy lay. The Austrian Poles were loyal and hated the Russians. The inhabitants of Warsaw and the surrounding country, which had been so hostile to Russia in the past, were now accustomed to living under the sceptre of the Tsar, and generally speaking were disposed to resist the invader. On the other hand, both sides found sympathisers among the people, and much spying and counterspying took place. Although the Prussian Government had systematically repressed Polish aspirations in Posen, and had done their best to obliterate the Polish language and nationality, yet it now made clumsy overtures to excite disaffection in Poland against the Russian rulers. These overtures met with little success ; though it cannot be denied that a certain section of the Poles still cherished a vendetta against Russia, and contrasted the German Government with their own to its disadvantage.

The Tsar, through the mouth of the Grand Duke Nicholas, as early as August 15th, made a great bid for Polish loyalty and support. The following proclamation, distributed broad-cast, promised to the Polish people a system of self-government which it was calculated would satisfy their national aspirations:

> "Poles! The hour has sounded when the sacred dream of your fathers and your grandfathers may be realised. A century and a half has passed since the living body of Poland was torn in pieces, but the soul of the country is not dead. It continues to live, inspired by the hope that there will come for the Polish people an hour of resurrection and of fraternal reconciliation with Great Russia. The Russian Army brings you the solemn news of this reconciliation, which obliterates the frontiers dividing the Polish peoples, and which it unites conjointly under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar. Under this sceptre Poland will be born again, free in her religion and her language. Russian autonomy only expects from you the same respect for the rights of those nationalities to which history has bound you.
>
> "With open heart and brotherly hand Great Russia advances to meet you. She believes that the sword with which she struck down her enemies at Gruenwald is not yet rusted. From the shores of the Pacific to the North Sea the Russian armies are marching. The dawn of a new life is beginning for you, and in this glorious dawn is seen the sign of the Cross, the symbol of suffering and of the resurrection of peoples."

Fate of Poland

In the last stages of the great war between Napoleon I and the European coalition, similar bids had been made for the favour of the Poles. They had, however, clung with tenacious loyalty to the declining fortunes of the French Emperor. After his fall, the Tsar Alexander I had made some genuine attempts to keep his pledges to Poland, and something like an autonomous government was established at Warsaw, which continued until the Polish insurrection in 1831, when Home Rule was roughly extinguished. Another sanguinary insurrection took place in 1863, which only resulted in the tightening of the cords of bureaucratic government.

Since that date peace has been maintained throughout the wide domains which were once the great kingdom of Poland, and no political effort of importance has been made to change its status. On the German side of the frontier, however, where Parliamentary representation gave voice to discontent, a group of deputies formed a Polish party in the Reichstag which exerted some small influence in German domestic politics. The Poles, however, have never forgotten the tragical history of their country. At an epoch when Russia was overrun with cruel hordes of Tartars the Polish sovereigns were the acknowledged chiefs of the Slav race, and their dominions extended from the Baltic coast of East Prussia across the Ukraine to the Black Sea. The lands of the Teutonic knights in East Prussia were fiefs of the kingdom of Poland, and Polish armies penetrated to Moscow in the east and fought the Turks on the banks of the Danube. The high-water mark of Turkish invasion was reached in the battle in which King John Sobieski defeated their hosts under the very walls of Vienna.

Gradually, however, Poland fell into decay. An unworkable constitution which attempted to combine monarchy with popular election, and which gave a power of veto to a minority in the national assembly over the legislative and executive measures of the Government, involved the country in ceaseless distraction. Civil strife and party conflict paralysed the life of the State and opened wide the door to foreign intrigue. One province after another was lost to the three neighbouring monarchies, Russia, Prussia, and Austria; and then came a period when Catherine the Great was enthroned at Petrograd and Frederick the Great reigned at Berlin. The well-worn pretext that the internal convulsions of Poland were a danger to her neighbours gave the opportunity for a final dismemberment, and not even the grim menace of the French Revolution deterred the Allied sovereigns from consummating the destruction of the Polish kingdom. In 1792 the cause of royalty in France was sacrificed to the territorial greed of Russia and Prussia while the

Revolution was permitted to gather way and proceed on its destructive course. The double catastrophe has influenced the politics of Europe ever since, and made possible, if indeed it did not prepare, the great war of 1914.

SEDAN DAY

The anniversary which the Germans commemorate for the victory of Sedan is September 2nd, for although the battle was won on September 1st, 1870, the surrender of the Emperor Napoleon III and the Imperial Army took place on the following morning. The occasion has been celebrated in Germany ever since by a popular fête; this year it fell in the midst of a drama even more moving than the fall of the French Empire. The war had lasted just a month, but serious fighting only began with the battle of Morhange in Lorraine on August 20th. There had already been startling vicissitudes in the struggle, but by the war on the Continent the German armies had already gained victories and secured results which surpassed the most sanguine anticipations of the German people. Belgium had been overrun, and all her resources seized by the conqueror. The French raid into Alsace had been held in check and the lost territory re-occupied. The same fate had befallen General de Castelnau's attempt to gain ground in Lorraine, though after his defeat at Morhange and Saarburg the French general had succeeded in maintaining himself on the heights round Nancy, and by dint of several shrewd counterstrokes kept the enemy at a respectful distance. Nevertheless, at the left of their long strategic line also, the situation was not unfavourable to the German arms, for between the groups of contending Forces, in Lorraine and in the plain of Alsace, the chain of the Vosges was now picketed by considerable German detachments who had ensconced themselves among the wooded heights and on the crest-line of the principal passes since the Sixth French army had been transferred to the north of France.

The German armies in Lorraine and Alsace constituted the strategic left wing of the whole army which was invading

France. The centre of the German host was composed of the Fifth and Fourth armies, commanded respectively by the German Crown Prince and Duke Albert of Würtemberg. The strategic right of this array consisted of the Second and First German armies, led respectively by Generals von Bülow and von Kluck, while the three Saxon corps of General von Haussen formed the Third army and acted as a link between the right wing and centre. This Third army, having been employed like the others in the general battle which drove the French out of Belgium, was used as a mass of manœuvre to strike alternately at the flank of the French centre and left.

To sum up the fortunes of the German centre and right, the Crown Prince's army had been victorious after a stubborn battle on the frontier at Longwy on August 22nd. The fort of Longwy fell after a stout attempt at resistance on the 26th, and on the same day the Crown Prince inflicted a sharp reverse on the French army pivoting on Verdun, which he drove southwards. The Fourth German army, in line with the Third, had defeated the French centre at the battle of Neufchâteau, and driven it first over the River Semois and then over the River Meuse, capturing numerous guns, standards, and prisoners, including several generals. The Second German army, under von Bülow, was hotly engaged on the 21st, and finally triumphed in the battle of Charleroi on the 22nd. It drove the French over the Sambre, compelled them to relinquish the line of the frontier, and to lose touch with the British army on their left. Our army, consisting of only five divisions, was, as we have seen, attacked on the afternoon of August 23rd by the First German army of von Kluck, consisting of five army corps, about 200,000 men. On the 24th, and again on the 26th, von Kluck attacked the British, and, skilfully using his twofold numerical superiority, compelled our troops to retreat with great loss, until the tardy appearance of the Sixth French army on our left began to hamper the German movements. Moving forward in a general line the five German armies, about a million warriors, pressed victoriously forward as far as the valley of the

Marne, in spite of the fierce counterstrokes of the French during their retreat across the northern Champagne. On September 2nd the First German army stood within two days' march of Paris and the fall of the capital seemed imminent. The Anglo-French Forces were falling back behind the Marne right along the line, the Crown Prince's columns had penetrated to the southern end of the Argonne, and Verdun was almost completely invested.

On the rearward communications of this great invading army, third-line troops had rapidly occupied every tactical point of importance, and were busy repairing and guarding the railways. Liége, Namur, Longwy, and Lille had fallen into the hands of the invaders, so that their communications with the homeland were secure and uninterrupted, though the demolitions on the French railways had put them to great inconvenience as they penetrated further into France.

Thus the German left and centre were engaged in a converging attack on the French armies standing on the defensive before Nancy and the fortress of Toul, which still maintained its connection with Verdun. This section of the line formed a salient projecting into the zone now dominated by the invaders. It was confidently expected that the French centre on the Marne would be effectually shattered by the general advance of the German armies as it had been on the frontier, and with the fall of Paris the general collapse of the French military and political system was expected throughout Germany. Belgium was effectually subjugated. A single German army corps, assisted by Landwehr units, blockaded Antwerp and held the Belgian field forces in check. Several Landwehr brigades stood in reserve behind it, overawed Brussels and the other great cities of Belgium, and mobile columns were preparing to establish themselves on the coast. To the people of Central Europe, the progress of the Army seemed to have been crowned by dazzling victories, nor were even the best-informed Germans aware of the anxieties and difficulties which beset the Supreme Command at this, the most critical stage of the war.

In a retrospect of the war on the Russian frontier, where the Germanic armies were limited to a defensive attitude, the situation, superficially at any rate, was at this period not less hopeful for the ultimate victory of the central Powers. The invasion of Eastern Prussia, which at one time had appeared to be so dangerous, had been foiled and repulsed with very severe loss to the assailants. It was known that the First Austrian army had been successful in its initial encounter with the army of Warsaw, and on the anniversary of Sedan it was not known in Berlin that this army had been compelled to withdraw, nor was it appreciated that the Russians had already crossed the frontier in overwhelming force from the direction of their army headquarters at Kieff. So far as the results of the struggle were known, it seemed a fair conclusion to draw that the Forces of the Dual Monarchy were strong enough not only to hold the Russians in check on the frontiers of Galicia and Southern Poland, but that they might be expected to anticipate the enemy by combining with von Hindenburg's army, which would shortly be reinforced by second-line troops in a general attack upon Warsaw and the fortified bridgeheads on the Vistula. Once established in the heart of Poland and dominating both banks of the great river which drains the Polish plain, the Germanic Forces might hope to split the armies of their adversary in twain and to prevent combination between the Russians who depended respectively on the railways north and south of the Pripet marshes, and thus to defeat them in detail.

Looking back on these stupendous military events, it is now easy to recognise that the Forces of Germany and Austria were insufficient for the task allotted to them, and that, great as were their successes, nothing but a chapter of accidents could have made those successes absolutely decisive in the first month of the war. The blunder of the French Chief Command in sending their Sixth army into the plain of Alsace, instead of concentrating all their available Forces for the struggle in the north-east, was a piece of luck upon which the German Command had no right to count. The German leaders also committed a grave mistake in underrating the fighting capacity of the French Army. In spite of the superiority of the German artillery and of the more important victories which it enabled them to obtain, the Germans never succeeded in shattering any one of the French armies or reducing it to a state of disorganisation sufficiently pronounced to prevent its resuming the offensive after a week's rest and recuperation.

At the last moment the German chiefs shrank from the corollary of their audacious strategy, when they abandoned the advance on Paris in order to prosecute the more orthodox scheme of completing the defeat of the French field army, but the widely eccentric movement westward of von Kluck's right wing after the battle of Le Cateau had already fatally compromised this alternative. In order to effect the necessary construction of the German line of battle, the German right wing had to march too far and too fast to achieve the object of dealing a *coup de grâce* against the French left wing; but when these criticisms are made, it must be admitted that the German leaders and troops performed a very brilliant feat of arms in the west, and unpleasantly surprised their adversaries by their leadership and fighting power. The one arm of their service which proved a comparative failure was their cavalry. Its inferiority was known to some expert spectators of German cavalry manœuvres, but apparently came as a great surprise to the General Staffs of the French and British Armies.

Turning again to the eastern theatre of war, the principal criticism which may be justly levelled at the German leadership is their undue contempt for their enemy, and their neglect to inform themselves accurately as to the value of his Forces, the state of preparation they were in at the outbreak of war, and the time it might be expected to take before they made themselves felt. The Austrian army detailed to hold in check the Russian army of Kieff was much too weak for this purpose, and therefore stood no chance of success. This army should in any case have been more than twice as strong as it was from the outset, even if the deficiency had been made good by reducing the First Austrian army and limiting its offensive rôle. It seems incontestable too that the campaign against Serbia should have been limited to the strictly necessary defensive, so as to reinforce the Second Austrian army east of Lemberg to at least eight army corps.

If, on the other hand, the plan of the Germanic allies was to capture Warsaw at any cost in the early stage of the war, before the Russians had become aware of the superiority of the German heavy artillery and of the necessity for keeping it at a distance from their forts by a system of trench warfare, then Warsaw should have been made the sole objective. Merely delaying Forces should have been left in East Prussia and Eastern Galicia with the mission of retiring before the enemy and delaying his advance as long as possible, and of occupying as many of his Forces as possible without a decisive action. Such a plan might conceivably have resulted in a victory as complete over the army of Warsaw as von Hindenburg's obtained over the army of Vilna, and the capture of the Polish capital. The result of this strategic plan would have been infinitely more far-reaching, although it must be admitted that it involved even greater risks than the plan actually adopted. The fact remains that the Russians, by assembling their Forces more rapidly than was expected by the German General Staff, were able to snatch back the initiative from their enemy in the last week in August and to dictate the locality of the decisive fighting, which in either case was on the extreme wings of the eastern theatre of war instead of at the vulnerable Russian centre. But in the eastern as in the western theatre both redoubtable opponents had displayed powers that surprised the world and proved how far developed the science of war and the science of preparation for war had become generally among the great States of Europe, and into what an extremely parlous predicament any one of them must sink if it chooses to neglect its national duties.

Tactically, the fighting in the eastern theatre of war was from the very beginning of the campaign far more interesting than in the west. Owing to the vast extent of the frontier upon which these armies were fighting, ample room existed on the right and left of the armies engaged for manœuvre and surprise, while a wide choice existed for both sides of lines of attack. All arms, including cavalry, had ample scope for their activity, and no single company, battery, or squadron was left many hours in idleness in either army. The Germans reaped considerable advantage in the first tactical encounters by the sounder judgment of their infantry training and their more careful use of entrenchment and machine-guns. The defence of East Prussia in particular, by inferior numbers, is a wonderful example of turning every sort of terrain to account and of using all arms and all resources with the greatest possible economy and to the greatest possible advantage. Much of the fighting took place in forests, which favour the attack, and particularly the attack of superior numbers; but even in these forests the Prussian infantry knew how to cover itself with rapidly constructed bulwarks of felled trees and tangled branches. Their daring plan of reserving the fire of the magazine rifle, combined with machine-guns, to meet the enemy's rush at the last moment proved conspicuously successful in this type of warfare, while in the open plain the superiority of their combination of field artillery and howitzers repeatedly gave them the victory.

The Austrian armies had neither the homogeneous character nor perfect discipline of their German allies, but the greater part of their Army, particularly those army corps recruited from the Tyrol, the Austrian provinces, and Hungary, repeatedly showed themselves equal to the best troops in Europe. From the outset the Austrian leaders were confronted with the most difficult strategic problem, for they were compelled to defend a long and weak line of frontier against superior numbers, and its configuration made the task even yet harder. If the German calculations as to the time required by the Russians to assemble their Forces on the frontier had proved correct, the armies of Austria would have had a fairer chance of accomplishing the rôle assigned to them. As events developed, the defence of Eastern Galicia against the army of Kieff proved to be hopeless, and a more modest programme, involving a more contracted line of battle, would have given the Austrians a far better chance of winning early victories. All strategy can be criticised, but it should not be forgotten that all strategy is perforce subordinated, to some degree at any rate, by political considerations. In the case of Austria and Russia the Dual Monarchy had a powerful motive to defend its outlying provinces as long as possible, in order to maintain its political prestige in the fringe of Slav provinces which surround the core of the Empire and the fringe of the Southern Slav States which lie beyond it in the Balkan Peninsula.

Consideration of the strategy of the Grand Duke Nicholas and his colleagues on the Russian General Staff compel admiration for the soundness of the general plan and the rapidity and the exactness with which it was executed, and for the courage with which some initial reverses were faced and retrieved. The all-important element of time peremptorily dictated the zone of assembly of the principal Russian groups of army corps and the path of invasion which they must pursue to bring the enemy to battle as soon as possible. Even the rash advance of General Samsonoff's army through the Masurian Lakes towards the banks of the Vistula had a sound and logical motive, and produced some valuable results by fixing the enemy's attention and distracting his energies. A grave fault was committed in the lack of co-ordination between the armies of Rennenkampf and Samsonoff in these operations. It was much too hastily assumed that Prussia was destitute of defenders, and the very difficulty of the East Prussian topography, which interfered in the combined action of the Russian columns, should have made the Russian generals cautious, and should have impelled them closely to co-ordinate their action.

Nothing is more remarkable in the early part of the war than the smoothness and efficiency with which the Russian military administration worked. The masses they brought into the field within a month on the frontiers of Prussia and Galicia were equal in numbers to the French Army, but the railway system which served them, and even more, the roads beyond the railheads, were incomparably inferior to the corresponding means of communication throughout Western Europe. The skill with which the Russians turned to account their very weakness in this respect when they had to check the movements of large German Forces in their own territory, is not less admirable than the energy they displayed in the use of their railways for their own purposes. The plan of defending Warsaw, first by striking at the enemy's extreme wing and later by a direct offensive at the vitals in the enemy's power, showed the highest strategical skill; the same may be said of the use of the Vistula and its fortified bridgeheads. Much as we admire the skill of the Russian strategists, none of their best strokes would have been feasible but for the extraordinary devotion, courage, and hardihood of the soldiers whom they commanded. Stubborn in defence, impetuous in attack, untirable on the march, the Slav regiments marched and countermarched in dust and heat, hungry and thirsty, on rations which would not have sufficed any other European army. If ammunition ran short they fought with the bayonet, and the large proportion of well-educated, enterprising officers to be found in their ranks removed the reproach of a low standard of military education which was formerly levelled at the Army of the Tsar.

CHAPTER X

THE EMERGENCY ARMY

If unpreparedness for war on land is any proof of a Government's innocent intentions and friendly attitude to its neighbours, then indeed the Ministry which ruled England during the years immediately preceding the war, can claim certificate for pacifism. There existed indeed a body with the high-sounding title of the " Committee of Imperial Defence," and it has been asserted by Ministers that the Committee of Imperial Defence performed various tasks which in all armies are allotted to the Headquarter Staff of the Army, such as the preparation of official military history, the handling of the railways in war, and the measures required for protecting our merchant marine. So far as the land Forces were concerned the standard approved was only equal to the organisation of punitive expeditions or small colonial wars. Even the Territorial Force, with its nominal annual training of only two weeks, was far below the establishment. The responsible advisers of the Crown either had no idea whatever of the meaning of a European war or they shrank from facing the situation for reasons which they preferred not to avow. When war overtook the nation in the first days of August all that could be done was to send an advanced guard to help our Allies, while the Forces needed to wage the struggle and to keep the enemy from establishing himself on the shores of the English Channel had to be created afresh.

The comparison between the available British Forces and any one of the great Continental Armies at the beginning of August 1914 reveals such a dangerous disparity of armed strength that it is doubtful whether England could claim to be a European State in the same sense as the great military Powers. The population of the British Isles was forty-five millions and was not less warlike than the rest of Europe. Although it was fashionable to make great professions of devotion to the cause of peace, which were current coin in Parliament and in all electoral contests, yet, when differences of opinion occurred with foreign Governments, the attitude of the British press and often of the British Cabinet was inclined to be aggressive and uncompromising—and with small regard to the means it possessed of imposing its will. Moreover, we had fallen into a bad habit of being shocked at the doings of some of our neighbours, and of lecturing them in a manner which irritated and profoundly annoyed them.

In the autumn of 1898 we were on the edge of a war with France because an exploring expedition commanded by a French officer had penetrated to the Valley of the Nile. It was no secret that this expedition was on its way for something like six months, yet during that time no steps were taken to arrest its progress or to deal with the awkward situation which was bound to arise directly the object of the expedition was reached. At the same time as we mortified French pride by expelling the French flag from the Nile Valley and by the unnecessarily provoking language adopted in our press at the time, the English newspapers were filled with sermons, denunciations, and reproofs of all that was most cherished in French public life in connection with the Dreyfus scandals, by which public opinion in England was deeply shocked. In spite of the obvious interests which bound the two countries together, such a state of tension existed in the winter of 1898–1899 that danger of war was by no means remote. The English fleet at that period was overwhelmingly superior to the French, yet a very awkward situation would have arisen for our country had war between England and France broken out in consequence of the Fashoda incident.

Even the most Liberal and pacifist groups of politicians were ready to wage sanguinary wars—and this without any particular preparations or means of doing so—with strong military Powers. The misgovernment of the last Sultan of Turkey was a favourite theme of well-meaning politicians, and even ministers of religion went out of their way to preach a modern crusade against the Sublime Porte and its 500,000 peasant soldiers. The practical difficulty of coercing such a nation never once troubled these generous men. Similarly, the civilising mission of gallant little Belgium on the banks of the Congo was represented as a cruel tyranny and a strong agitation brought pressure to bear on the British Government to interfere with the internal affairs of the Belgians, in a manner which caused grave offence and lent itself to insidious representations in an interested quarter that Britain's real motive was covetousness, and that the transfer of the rich Belgian territory in Africa to the British Empire was the real object in view.

Let us take one more example of the reckless manner in which foreign countries were flouted. It is necessary to recall the relations between England and Russia during the Manchurian War. The treaty obligations which bound England and Japan to one another in themselves constituted a delicate situation ; for we had guaranteed to go to the help of Japan in case any other great Power should join Russia in attacking her. This guarantee might have caused us a war with the European Coalition, and therefore it behoved our statesmen to tread very warily whenever perplexing incidents arose. When the Russian Baltic fleet set forth on its long voyage to the Sea of Japan, it fired upon and sank some British fishing boats. Naturally enough, English opinion was excited and incensed, but since there was no doubt this violence resulted from a real mistake, and that not improbably it was caused by the blunder of a single nervous officer, it behoved us not to lay too much stress upon it. It is true our Government refrained from any hostile action, but the language of several influential newspapers did a good deal to inflame the wound, and the tendency to do so was not entirely confined to extreme Imperialists. If any one of these diplomatic incidents had resulted in war, the British Empire would have been exposed to far greater dangers than threatened it at the beginning of the present war, because it could not have counted on a single European ally in any one of them, and might not impossibly have been attacked by a league which might have embraced practically the whole military power of Europe.

The curious phenomenon existed in English politics of a tendency to self-righteous denunciation of so-called militarism and warlike preparation, while at the same time the actions of the Government and the voice of the people were frequently aggressive, and even provocative. No preparations whatever were made for enforcing an aggressive policy. Successive British Cabinets were satisfied by possessing, as they believed, the power of establishing a maritime superiority, while the land forces languished for lack of interest, lack of organisation, and lack of necessary equipment, and their numbers barely sufficed to maintain order in what has been boastfully called the " far-flung Empire " of the British people. Now the word Empire implies a military confederacy.

Democracy, on the other hand, implies that the supreme power is confided to the electorate ; but the electors of the United Kingdom refrained from informing themselves as to the conditions of international politics and as to the extent to which those politics hinged upon the use of force, while the political leaders strove hard to focus all political interest on questions of profit and loss, wages, and on local and domestic disputes. Questions of incredibly small importance often turned the scale at contested elections at the most critical moments in the international position of the State. The youth of the country were encouraged to abstain from taking up the burden of military service and, speaking generally, the most profound ignorance existed in August 1914 on such questions as whether England could or could not be involved in the European war, whether the conquest of France by Germany would or would not involve our country in danger, and what scale of army and armament would be necessary in case our country became involved in the European war.

Fortune favoured us to a remarkable extent when war once broke out in the obliteration of internal dissensions and the solid front we were therefore able to present to our foes. The state of Ireland in those days was such as to cause anxiety to the Government, and Lord Kitchener might easily have had the same difficulties to contend with in Ireland as beset the statesmen who waged the war with the French Revolution. Industrial unrest threatened at any time to produce serious strikes, but the German challenge had the effect of making every one forget his grievances before the external danger. India, Egypt, and South Africa might well have been centres of disturbance, but, as the events proved, these dependencies stood by their suzerain with loyal zeal, while the great Dominions of Canada and Australasia eagerly came to the assistance of the Mother Country with unsolicited supplies of men and arms. Thus the British Empire was able to present a united front on land, covered by the protection of the superior fleet, and consequently became a far more formidable adversary than seemed probable, or than had been expected by the General Staffs of the Continent. Nevertheless, it became at once apparent, even to those who had repeatedly derided the idea, that a British army must be raised on the same scale as other European States, not only to deliver our French allies from the thrall of the German, but also to meet the possibility of a German invasion of England which might have involved us in the hapless fate of Belgium and Northern France.

The following extract from the *Daily Telegraph* of August 1, 1914, gives the numerical strength of the British Forces at that date, and with this nucleus a modern army had to be created as early as possible with what material existed after the dispatch of the Expeditionary Forces to France :

> " Alone of the European States, Britain has no system of national military training, no reserve of trained soldiers to replace the first line, and the first line itself is principally devoted to sedentary garrison duty in the Colonies and naval stations, and to supplying the Indian army with a strong nucleus of British field troops.
>
> " The Regular Army in peace was distributed as follows :

At Home

Combatant troops in British Isles . .	122,000
Army Service, medical, and other non-combatants	14,000
Total	136,000

Abroad

Troops, including non-combatants, in India	76,000
Troops in Colonies and naval ports .	45,500
Total	121,500
Grand Total . . .	250,000

"Next in importance comes the so-called Army Reserves, which is in reality the first line for home service, and which must be embodied in the ranks before the regiments of the Home Army can take the field. The strength of this Reserve is at present 156,000 men, or 12,000 less than its authorised establishment.

"The troops in the United Kingdom are organised in six divisions of field troops, leaving a balance of ten infantry regiments and small forces of the other arms. The field divisions consist each of twelve infantry one-battalion regiments with seventy-six guns, or 19,000 men. The total of the Expeditionary Force is officially reckoned at 165,000 men, so that it is very lavishly found in non-combatants, etc., for its infantry divisions do not total up more than 72,000 men, and it is usually reckoned that the infantry amount to about two-thirds of an army. The Expeditionary Force also includes four brigades of very highly trained and well-mounted cavalry; it is very lavishly equipped both with artillery and auxiliary services. A cavalry brigade includes nine squadrons, and a squadron will march out with about 120 horsemen in the ranks. According to Continental calculation the six infantry divisions and four cavalry brigades would be reckoned at from 110,000 to 120,000 fighting men. Small as this force seems by comparison with Continental hosts, yet, if it can be put in the field in time for the decisive battle, complete under the command of a capable and energetic chief, it will undoubtedly exert an important influence, both materially and morally.

" The real reserve of the Army is formed by the balance of the ' Army Reserve,' after mobilising the first line, together with the old Militia, renamed Special Reserve under the Haldane scheme. These 101 battalions of Militia have dwindled from the fine force which was then dismantled, but still consists of about 50,000 lads who have received a fair recruit training. These troops could help to replace losses in action by drafts to the front, and could do garrison duty in the meanwhile. They are short of officers and instructors. It is very difficult to form a correct estimate of the strength of the Reserve which would be available if all the Expeditionary Force were embodied and sent abroad, but, including Militia, it might reach the total of 100,000 men, who have at any rate done their recruit's education in arms. Such numbers would be insufficient for a prolonged war, even to keep 150,000 men with the colours in the field, but will be very useful to fill the gap after the first shock.

" The policy pursued by the War Ministry for the last seven years has been to confide the safety of the kingdom in war to the Territorial Forces, which have been evolved from the old Volunteers. These forces have been organised in fourteen infantry divisions, each of twelve regiments, and fourteen Yeomanry brigades. These units would probably be able to take the field fairly complete in numbers within a month of their embodiment. They include in their ranks a large proportion of trained officers and men and are animated with zeal and military spirit. As a nucleus for fresh levies, and for considerable expansion of the Army should the war become grave for us, the Territorial troops would be valuable. The Yeomanry in particular is superior to the second-line cavalry of the Continent, and is on the whole well mounted.

"Canada and the other Dominions possess local forces which are at any rate sufficient for the present to guard their territory from sudden attack or internal disorder. Egypt has beside its small British garrison a highly-trained native contingent, which could defend the Delta against all immediate danger, but the important question for us outside the sphere of the Home Army lies in India, which has to be defended against external attack and insurrection within. As already stated, there are 76,000 British troops in India, including fifty-two infantry and nine cavalry regiments. There are also forty Indian cavalry regiments, 140 infantry regiments, and twelve mountain batteries, besides Engineers and Auxiliary Services. The strength of the native Indian Army is 164,000 men.

"Considering the size of the Indian Peninsula, and the extent of its frontiers, some of which are infested by warlike mountaineers, the Indian Army cannot be considered too large, but while the peace of Asia is guaranteed by Russia and Japan, it is evident that India can, if necessary, spare an army corps for imperial purposes, as she did to suppress the Boxer revolt in the middle of the South African War. The Indian cavalry is recruited from families which have ridden and handled sword and lance from childhood. The troopers are devoted to the service, fanatically attached to their regiments, and under skilful leadership could confidently match themselves against any cavalry troops in the world."

On August 4, 1914, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, was also Secretary of State for War, but Lord Haldane, the Lord Chancellor, who had held the post of War Minister during the critical years preceding the war, was actually in charge of the department. The palpable failure of his administration to provide against the catastrophe had undermined the public confidence in this versatile statesman, and a formidable public agitation demanded the appointment of a military officer, preferably Lord Kitchener, our Viceroy in Egypt, to the post of Secretary of State for War. This appointment was very unpopular with the Liberal rank and file, who dreaded Kitchener's masterful ways, but the fear inspired by Germany and the general sense of a landslide having occurred which had shattered all foundations of our military policy, imposed upon the Cabinet the necessity of substituting Lord Kitchener for Lord Haldane, with the mission of the most vigorous possible prosecution of the war.

The task which beset the new Minister for War was indeed colossal, and its difficulty was enormously increased by the dispatch to the seat of war in France of the most competent members of the War Office Staff, together with the pick of the regular troops, who might otherwise have served as a nucleus to the contemplated new army. The chief preoccupation of the War Office was how to raise large numbers of men by voluntary enlistment. Lord Kitchener's first executive act of importance was the call for 100,000 voluntary recruits, and these were speedily enrolled.

Lord Kitchener's letter to the Lords-Lieutenant of Counties and to the Chairman of the Territorial Force Associations was in the following terms :

"War Office, London, S.W.,
" *August* 7, 1914.

> " Sir,—In the present grave emergency the War Office looks with the utmost confidence to you for a continuance of the invaluable help which you have given in the past.
>
> " I therefore desire to invite your co-operation in the work of raising the additional number of Regular troops required at once for the Army.
>
> " It is intended to enlist as soon as possible 100,000 men, and I would ask you to use your great local influence, and that of the Territorial Associations, to secure these necessary recruits as soon as possible.
>
> " The men will be accommodated in camps established at or near the existing Regular depots, to which intending recruits may be sent, the camp nearest the place from which they are drawn being selected.

> "No responsibility for clothing or equipping the men will devolve upon County Associations; this will be arranged by the military authorities.
>
> "Members of the Territorial Force may be enlisted, provided they fulfil the prescribed conditions as to age and physical fitness.
>
> "Territorial Force units that are at full strength will not recruit additional men until the 100,000 men are provided, but should any of their numbers desire to join the Regular forces now being raised, their places in the Territorial unit should be filled as soon as possible by men desirous of joining the Territorial Force only, and not the Regular Army.
>
> "Territorial units available for foreign service will naturally not be affected by this recruiting of Regular troops.
>
> "Such is the general outline of the scheme, in the furtherance of which you are desired to co-operate as far as possible.
>
> "It is not an ordinary appeal from the Army for recruits, but the formation of a second Army, and it is hoped that you will be able to assist in getting the men in every way in your power.
>
> "I am, sir, your obedient servant,
>
> "(Signed) KITCHENER."

On August 10, only three days after this appeal had been sent out, the War Office was able to issue the following gratifying statement:

> "The number of men coming forward to join the Army is increasing every day.
>
> "At this time of year in ordinary times the number of recruits per week averages about 500. Now the number who enlist daily is as much as 3,000, and will shortly largely exceed this number. The machinery for dealing with the enlistment of such large numbers has, of course, had to be very greatly enlarged. Extra offices have been opened in Town Halls and other large buildings all over

> the country with staffs of doctors, attesting officers, clerks, etc., to deal with the very large and increasing numbers of men who from patriotic motives are presenting themselves for enrolment.
>
> " During the week-end nearly 6,000 men have been enlisted, and it is fully expected that the 100,000 required by Lord Kitchener will be obtained in a far shorter time than could have been thought possible before the call to arms was made.
>
> " Quite a number of the men coming forward have already had experience of military training, and will be ready to take their places in the ranks after quite a short period of training.
>
> " The percentages of unfit have fallen from about 30 per cent. to well under 20 per cent., owing to the excellent class of man that is coming forward to enlist, and their physical development is far higher than that which obtains amongst the ordinary recruits in times of peace. In fact, the type of man, as well as the numbers coming forward, are most satisfactory."

Encouraged by the success of his first attempt and at the same time impressed with the increasing peril of the military situation, Lord Kitchener raised his demand to 500,000 before the end of August, but no plan seems to have been accepted by the Cabinet as to the scale on which they intended to conduct military operations, or as to the general scheme of the new organisation. Lord Kitchener, however, went as far as to decree the constitution of six new divisions, to which commanders and staff were appointed. At the same time the Territorial Associations were authorised to raise regiments within their jurisdiction to war strength by filling up vacancies with new recruits and, when that was accomplished, to levy a second line of fresh units. The depleted ranks of the Territorial regiments at the beginning of the war, as well as their lack of training and discipline, induced the Government to refrain from using them in the critical period of the August campaign, although the Territorial divisions were complete in war equipment.

The inability to forecast the size and scope of the new levies and of the tasks to be allotted to them, prevented the methodical construction of their framework—that is to say, staff officers and non-commissioned officers, technically known as cadres. The Military Secretary's department of the War Office, whose duty it was to select and appoint officers, was quite unequal to cope with the creation of these fresh forces. Officers were appointed locally in a haphazard way among the young men who applied for the rank, and, as might have been expected, several thousand of the more conscientious and more modest who should have been trained as officers enlisted in the ranks, while a great many who were altogether unfit for an officer's position received commissions. The higher ranks were filled by retired officers, and to a very limited extent by transfer from existing forces. The difficulty of providing cadres for a new army was in any case tremendous, but the failure properly to organise the choice of candidates for new commissions was the most serious handicap that the new army has had to bear since its creation. As fast as the men were enrolled, they were collected at various centres where they were billeted or camped out as circumstances permitted. In some instances, local arrangements were made by contract for the construction of camps or huts, and, as might have been expected, these arrangements did not always give satisfaction, but the net result was the rapid creation of six fresh divisions, while the uninterrupted flow of recruits into the depots of the Regular Army, into the Territorial regiments, and into the new army which was organised in " Service " battalions and popularly known as " Kitchener's."

Although the first great anxiety of the Government was to find recruits for the rank and file, it was next face to face with a not less urgent difficulty in providing them with arms and ammunition. The provision of reserve stores either of one or of the other had been entirely neglected by the last two War Ministers, and the Expeditionary Forces expended, during three battles in August, the munitions which had been calculated by the Committee of Imperial Defence to keep it in the field for six months. In order, therefore, to maintain the fighting power of the Army in the field almost all available supplies at home had to be sent to the front, leaving the troops detailed for the defence of the Kingdom with a dangerously low margin of stores and without any surplus of arms or ammunition for the new levies which were being rapidly collected. Consequently recourse was made in hot haste to manufacturers in order to make good the deficit, while the agents of the British Government purchased all that was possible in neutral States. Unfortunately, manufacturers had been discouraged from maintaining in peace the plant necessary for making arms and munitions, and making the plant not seldom took longer than making the munitions, while the widely extended state of war greatly increased the difficulty of importing and enhanced the price. The necessity for creating so much afresh, and with such slender materials, delayed the operations of the War Office and put a severe strain on its mechanism.

At this crisis in the country's history, it owed salvation to the patriotism and energy of many hundred retired officers who did not hesitate to throw up peaceful professions and employments and come to the rescue of the Government. Many of these gentlemen provided, out of their own pockets, horses, arms, saddlery, and equipment of all sorts, for the early instruction and equipment of the new levies before the War Office was able to provide the most necessary implements. The country, owing to its peculiar free trade system, had depended upon Germany for its supplies of articles indispensable to the training of troops, such as mathematical instruments, field glasses, and even weapons. We were now suddenly thrown upon our own resources for all these things, and at every turn the War Office was beset by demands for fresh stores, some of which had hardly been heard of before, and most of which had been regarded as expensive luxuries which could easily be dispensed with by a pacifist State. The demands of the army in the field went on augmenting as the resourcefulness of the enemy and the development of the contest brought out the value of fresh military expedients, so that the feat performed by

Lord Kitchener in maintaining an Expeditionary Force at a war strength in France and replacing its losses of men and material sustained in the costly retreat from the French frontier to the Marne, besides bringing the Territorial army to its full numbers, organising their depots, and raising a continual stream of men for the new levies, must be considered to rank as the highest performance of the kind recorded in our history.

The conditions of service of the Territorial Forces under Lord Haldane's Act precluded service abroad. The force existed, as its name indicates, for the defence of the realm, but the necessity for relieving the regular regiments quartered in India, South Africa, the Mediterranean, and other similar foreign stations in order to constitute fresh divisions of the Regular Army in France, compelled the Government to go back on their pledge to the Territorials and to demand their services in India, Egypt, and elsewhere. The majority of officers and men affected willingly changed their status in order to meet the new requirements of the Cabinet, and the small minority who resisted the pressure put upon them to serve abroad were transferred into the new second-line units which began to be formed in August. This new disposition of the Territorial Forces enabled us to put a powerful garrison into Egypt and to relieve two divisions of regular troops, which formed a fourth army corps for service in France. None the less, the principle of breaking faith, for such it was, with men who had given up their time to performing military duties hitherto neglected by their fellow-citizens, cannot be defended as honourable or expedient, and cannot be cited to the credit of the Haldane scheme, which was thus found to be unworkable at the first serious test. Beside the Territorial divisions sent abroad, the defence of the United Kingdom was entirely confided to those remaining at home for a considerable period, during which these troops worked hard to acquire military consistency and manœuvring power. It must, however, be reckoned as a very fortunate circumstance that no unforeseen developments of contemporary war exposed these divisions to the shock of such a battle as Mons or Le Cateau during the first few months of their embodiment.

Of all the dangers that confronted English people in August 1914, the inability of their rulers to comprehend the nature of the struggle in which we were engaged was certainly the greatest. Several gifted writers, who may or may not have been inspired by a foreign Government in the years immediately preceding the war, had written eloquently to show that war was impossible because it was undesirable, and because it would " ruin " leading financiers, and also because it would prove in the long run more expensive to the victors than to the vanquished. The example of Belgium was quoted to demonstrate the absolute safety in which a nation might live and preserve its independence and wealth without the burdensome necessity of military service. These arguments in a greater or less degree had been accepted by prominent politicians, though the Ministry, to the disgust of a large section of their supporters, had hedged to the extent of maintaining our Navy on a scale unquestionably superior to any other. It was this judicious hedging which saved Great Britain from sharing the fate of Belgium, but the imminence of the peril enlightened every one to some degree, and the majority of our people understood the necessity for winning the war. Unfortunately, only a comparatively small minority understood that in order to win the war, Britain would have to make the utmost effort of which she was capable, and this small minority did not include the political leaders of the Ministry or the Opposition. Although consideration for a neutral Power precluded our Government from decreeing an absolute blockade, it seems to have been believed that as soon as a partial embargo was placed on German trade, lack of copper or perhaps of nitrate would cause the early collapse of the German Empire and the defeat of the Germanic field armies. This too sanguine view seems to have accounted for the ludicrously inadequate preparations in organising the fighting power of the nation, and the lamentable procrastination in adopting the only measures which could possibly enable the British Empire to defeat the Germans.

The stream of panic-stricken fugitives which poured across the Channel from Ostend and Antwerp from the ravaged plains of Belgium in August 1914, at any rate enlightened our public and press upon the real meaning of German invasion, and even those authorities who had been prominent in ridiculing the possibility of such a thing as a hostile landing on English soil, now began to take a very different view of the situation. They not only acquiesced in the enrolment of every available volunteer for the prosecution of the war, but quite a considerable section, which has continually expanded, at last understood that contemporary war cannot be won with a fraction of the manhood of the nation, but demands its whole available strength.

The passage of the Straits of Dover by hostile transports was admittedly impossible so long as the British Navy remained undefeated, and it would be a very difficult military enterprise even supported by a superior fleet, as our experience in the Dardanelles has proved. The eastern coastline, however, of our island for a distance of 600 miles offers a promising target to German invasion, and although such invasion would almost certainly be frustrated unless the German High Sea Fleet were at any rate in temporary command of the North Sea, yet the possibility of a doubtful naval struggle could not altogether be disregarded, and such an indecisive contest between the rival fleets might not impossibly give the opportunity of landing considerable forces on our shores, provided the enemy did not shrink from running great risks in order to win a big triumph. The possibility of a certain area being rapidly overrun by superior forces, and this area being enclosed with just such a formidable system of entrenchments as the Germans have erected to cover their acquisitions in Belgium and Northern France, could not be lost sight of. If the county of Kent, or Norfolk and Suffolk, or the country between the Humber and the Tyne, fell a prey to the enemy and was encircled by a network of entrenchments, it might prove extremely difficult to dislodge him even if his communications by sea with his base were precarious. And if the command of the North Sea were lost by us for two or three weeks, an invading army, once landed, might not only overrun a convenient stretch of territory, but it might accumulate a vast store of munitions in order to maintain its hold. Moreover, if the landing were effected in Yorkshire, for instance, important manufacturing resources would fall into the hands of the enemy with the same stroke as deprived us of our support. A vision of English towns and countryside laid desolate by the ruthless invader haunted the public imagination and made it possible for the military authorities to take such precautions as the situation dictated, and as our resources permitted, without popular opposition. The increasing number of volunteers which joined the Army also strengthened the hands of the War Minister, because these men were disposed to resent any sign of lukewarmness and any disposition to obstruct their efforts.

Quite apart from the vicissitudes and possible surprises of fighting on the sea, one circumstance must ever guarantee a very great advantage to the defenders of the island against any Continental army which may seek to effect a landing on its coast. Nothing less than an army corps of 30,000 men would suffice to act as a sufficient advance-guard of an invasion by an army which could seriously menace our safety. Now the landing of 30,000 men with their field artillery could not be accomplished in less than a day, and the perfect network of railways which connects the coast with the midland districts renders it possible to concentrate several British divisions at any point on the coast which may be selected as a landing place in time to give battle before the invaders could entrench themselves in a strong tactical position. The interval of time which would be available for us to strike at the head of the invasion by superior forces would necessarily be very brief, and the chance of doing so with success would depend on the prompt decision of the British Commander-in-Chief, the prompt and harmonious co-operation of his subordinates, and the launching of a resolute attack at the right place without the loss of an hour. Naturally the enemy would do his best to perplex the defenders by feigning to land, and might even perhaps effect landings, at several points not intended as the real attempt; it would certainly be necessary for the British Forces to be prepared to meet attacks at several points on the coast simultaneously, and in order to do so the quartering and distribution of the defending forces is a matter of most vital importance. Cavalry and bicyclist battalions, well supplied with mobile artillery, are especially necessary to frustrate the establishment of a formidable hostile advance-guard on the Eastern Coast.

However cruel the experience would be for us if a German army established and entrenched itself on any portion of our territory, yet the experience of the war in France has shown that it would not necessarily involve the downfall of the country. British Forces could hem in the enemy with counter-entrenchments and bring continual pressure to bear on its front. Every square mile of the country in his occupation would have to be carefully watched, his communications by sea, even in the event of a partial success of his fleet, would at best be precarious and continually interrupted, and more probably would be cut off altogether. In the latter case his rear would be constantly exposed to attack from the sea, even if he succeeded in defending the zone of entrenchments by which he covered his front. Such war actually fought in the English counties has always appeared to be too horrible even for theoretical discussion, yet the contingency is not impossible, although it is remote. If England were waging war against Germany in a duel in which neither side had allies, or if Germany in a war with England by force or guile obtained the use of the French naval bases, or any naval bases west of Dover, then indeed the problem of defending Great Britain would be tenfold more difficult, and the task of the Royal Navy would be greatly complicated.

The success of our new armies, the call for a first million, then for a second million, and then for 300,000 in the spring of 1915, are features of England's share in the war which will not be readily forgotten. As soon as the initial requirements of the Government were made known, scores of Ministers, ex-Ministers, peers, members of Parliament, university professors, and in fact public men of all descriptions, hastened to inform the public, by speeches, lectures, pamphlets, books, and newspaper articles, of the facts of the situation, and the stimulus thus given to recruiting has never been lacking. The proclamation of The County of London Territorial

Association, issued "To the Young Men of London," on August 26, may stand as a specimen of many similar dignified and explanatory appeals:

> "YOUNG MEN OF LONDON:
>
> "Practically every regiment in the County of London has volunteered to serve the King oversea.
>
> "Lord Kitchener has asked us, the County Association, to raise a second unit in reserve for every one that has thus so splendidly come forward.
>
> "The compulsory power of enlisting soldiers which our ancestors had and used we do not possess.
>
> "A menace greater than Napoleon's hangs over this country.
>
> "Set an example to the whole kingdom. Give to the King 20,000 Territorials in a few days—not weeks.
>
> "Bring your friends with you, your school friends, and your companions in business. Enlist in whole companies and battalions.
>
> "I appeal to all mothers to let their sons come into the service of the King.
>
> "At such a time as this no girl should be seen abroad with a youth who is not wearing the King's uniform.
>
> "You know what horrors Belgium has suffered. Her refugees are driven to the shelter of our land. For us there is no refuge in other lands or oversea. In the name of this Association defend the capital of the Empire.
>
> "Territorial Force Association of the County of London,
> "Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea, S.W.,
> "August 25."

The response of eligible men of military age to the appeals of the Government for recruits was, if possible, too rapid. At the beginning the authorities had no accommodation for the large numbers of men offering themselves, and many thousands had to be billeted for a time in their own homes. Recruits marched and manœuvred in their own everyday civilian dress, for uniforms could not be turned out quickly enough; and they performed their drill and exercises with dummy rifles because there were too few real weapons to go round. Hundreds of photographs showed apparently innumerable men waiting in queues outside recruiting offices ready to be examined, and in many cases the overworked officials had to turn men away through the sheer mechanical impossibility of coping with them.

This was perhaps one of the chief causes—though there were others of a like temporary nature—why recruiting flagged at times. The news of a German success on land or sea brought a rush of men to the colours, but at a few periods in the autumn and winter of 1914 recruiting, in the absence of such stimuli, was not sufficiently rapid to satisfy the authorities. Mr. Asquith's first stirring speech in the Guildhall had had an almost magical effect, but there were young men who, even after reading it, were still not convinced of necessities under which the Government was labouring. Even after the raid on the Hartlepools the *Daily Telegraph* felt justified in saying:

> "The response which the young men of the country are making to the call to arms is not commensurate with the urgent requirements of the authorities.
>
> "This week a subtle and powerful enemy has come to our very shores; yet men are hanging back. Bravery and enthusiasm are not lacking, but, in spite of all efforts of the authorities to disclaim it, a feeling has spread that men were enlisting as rapidly as they were required. Without any qualification this is an entirely erroneous impression.
>
> "There is a growing feeling that unless men come forward other measures may have to be taken. These, it is believed, would include a household census, showing the age, height, etc., of every male person, in order that it may be known what material there is to fall back upon should the voluntary system fail.
>
> "London has done well, but everywhere are to be seen strolling in the streets and open spaces youths well fitted to undergo the training to arms. There were over

twenty strapping fellows lolling on the railings of St. James's Park yesterday afternoon watching the lazy pelicans. The recruiting tents close at hand failed to interest them. On September 7 there were 5,000 recruits. Now a fifth of that number is a good day.

"'We want,' stated a leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* two months ago, 'the old soldiers, the ex-non-commissioned officers, the commissioned officers now in retirement, to help in the work of training the bodies of recruits. . . . The work of enlistment and training must go on together.' There was a good response, but more men are wanted.

"On September 4 Mr. Asquith, speaking at Guildhall, said: 'Mobilisation was ordered on August 4. Immediately afterwards Lord Kitchener issued his call for 100,000 recruits for the Regular Army, which has been followed by a second call for another 100,000. The response up to to-day gives us between 250,000 and 300,000. I am glad to say that London has done its share. The total number of Londoners accepted is not less than 42,000. . . . We want more men, men of the best fighting quality.'

"Old public school and university men, sportsmen, professional men of all sorts, and numbers of artisans responded, but the proportion of the last-named has never been comparable, it is stated, with their percentage of the population. Need for patriotism was never greater than to-day. The way to show it is by attending at the recruiting offices, lists of which are freely advertised on hoardings and public buildings throughout the country.

"There should be no difficulty in supplying the men for whom Lord Kitchener has appealed since the requests referred to by Mr. Asquith. We are better able to do so than Germany or France. There is no lack of material. This country contains a larger proportion of young adults than Germany or France. The age distribution of England and Wales and Scotland shows that Ireland is not quite so much favoured.

"Take only the unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five in England and Wales, and we find there are over 3,000,000.

"The figures are :—

Age 18	322,721	Age 27	141,143
,, 19	313,992	,, 28	123,545
,, 20	301,181	,, 29	104,342
,, 21	284,322	,, 30	95,846
,, 22	262,209	,, 31	78,027
,, 23	237,988	,, 32	74,414
,, 24	211,637	,, 33	64,981
,, 25	186,031	,, 34	60,172
,, 26	161,144	,, 35	56,465

"Large numbers of married men are fighting for King and country, for hearth and home, for humanity and peace, and not one-fourth of the single men have answered the call. They are leaving their protection to those who have wives and families.

"In the northern counties it is hoped to have a revival of recruiting. In Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Westmorland, Northumberland, and Yorkshire, there is a very large percentage of single men. In Yorkshire, including the males of all ages, the proportion is: Married, 742,427; unmarried, 1,129,909.

"The arresting of the advance of the enemy in France and Belgium has had the effect of stemming enlistment. It has created a feeling of more security, the fact being quite ignored that the fighting will be more difficult and the need for men greater as the Germans are pushed back to the places they have so strongly fortified. This applies especially to strongholds on German territory. With more men they can be hurled back and victory assured. Without more men the task appears to be almost superhuman."

The plans of the German General Staff for neutralising the efforts of the British Empire, in case it should join the Franco-

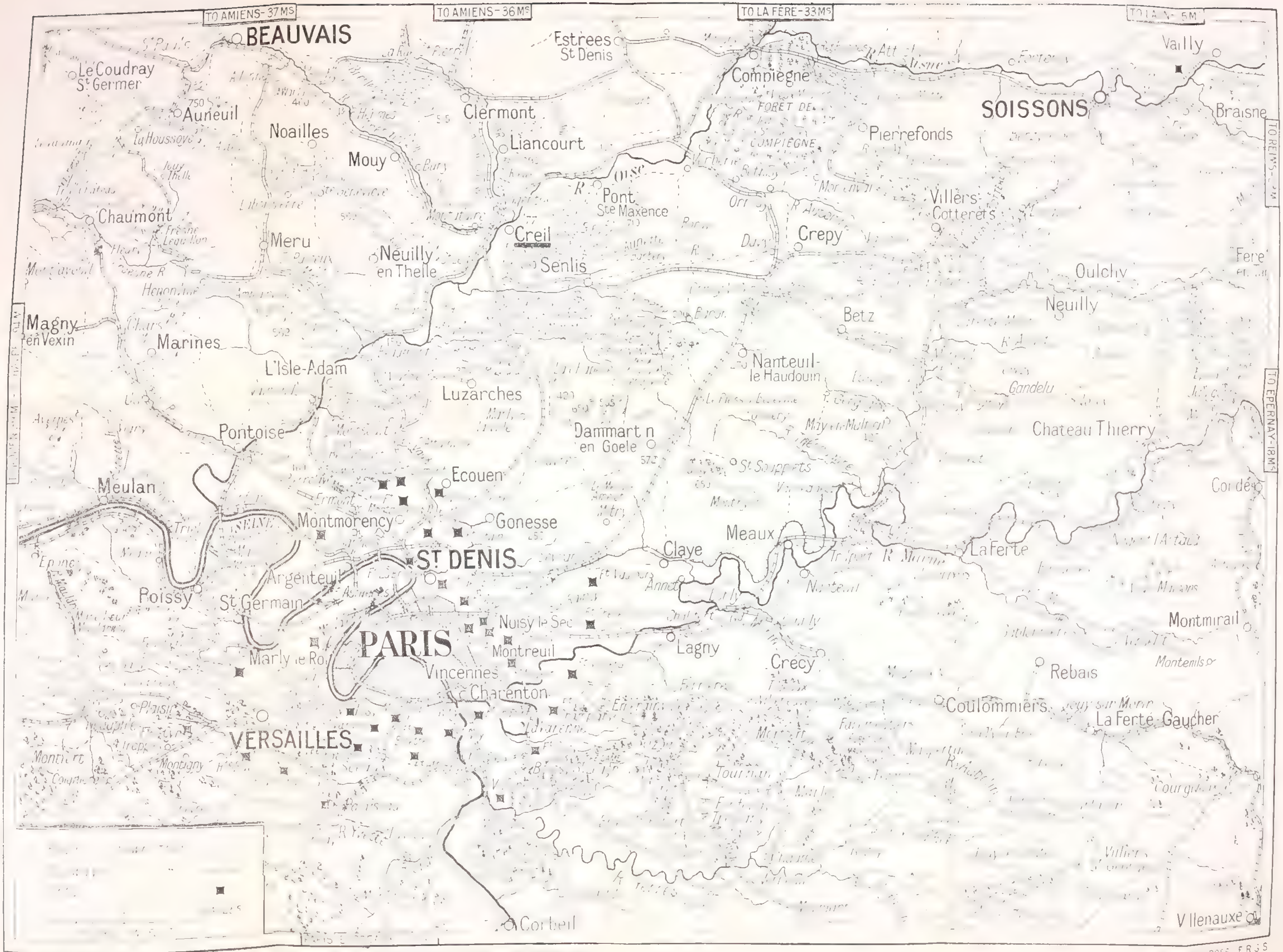
Russian Alliance, hinged to a great extent upon the supposed disaffection of Ireland, India, Egypt, and South Africa. In each case, the idea was warranted by certain well-known facts, and if the occasion had been skilfully chosen, it is impossible to deny that the enemy would have reaped some advantage from the political divisions of these States. In Ireland a dangerous state of unrest existed, owing to the Home Rule agitation; both in Egypt and in India there were elements hostile to British rule, and the constant discontent of the Mussulman population under alien rulers. In South Africa also there still existed certain elements of disturbance, but in each case the feelings of the people were very different from what they were pictured to be in Berlin. The fact which the Germans failed to grasp, and which in any case would have been incredible to them, was that every State composing the British Empire, whether satisfied or dissatisfied with British rule, infinitely preferred it to the prospect of German rule, or to the prospect of German domination in any shape or form. And so it happened that even Ireland, where dangerous sedition was actually brewing, became pacified, and even loyal, as if by the stroke of a magician's wand, when the struggle with Germany became a reality. The somewhat aimless discontent which prevailed in India instantly disappeared at the prospect of joining the European war. Egypt gave no trouble to its garrison, and the recently defeated burghers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State lost no time in taking up arms to invade German territory. The rebellion which was successfully engineered in the Orange Free State never assumed alarming proportions, but had more the character of a mutiny of local militia.

Still more surprising to the Teutonic mind must have been the response of the Great Dominions oversea—Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—to the Mother Country's call for aid. Before any formal or official request had reached their Governments, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders enthusiastically proclaimed their determination to support Great Britain, and preparations were instantly made for levying and training troops for that end on a scale never yet contemplated among such thin populations scattered over so vast a territory. Although the contingents from the British Dominions needed time to take their place in the line of battle with their British comrades, yet their determination to assist us relieved the Imperial Government from many anxieties and greatly strengthened their hand in advising the general scheme of the war.

If the French armies had been victorious in the first stage of the war, the British Government might not impossibly have adhered to the theory of limited action upon which the Expeditionary Forces had been calculated, or, at any rate, it might have attempted to do so; but the commencement of the campaign was of a nature to open the eyes of even the least imaginative of our politicians. They suddenly beheld the cataract towards which they had been steering, and the new Secretary of State for War was authorised to collect all the forces of the Empire for the decisive theatre of operations as soon as possible. Of the British troops quartered in India, several divisions were ordered to take the field either in France or in Egypt, besides a corps of Indian troops whom it was intended to land in Southern France, as soon as the necessary preparations should be made. These preparations entailed great difficulty and delay. Troops equipped for Indian warfare are not necessarily ready to take part immediately in a campaign in France. All their clothing had to be furnished anew as well as their transport. Horses and men had to be acclimatised after a long voyage, and all these measures entailed difficulty and delay. Another difficulty which presented itself to the War Administration was the replacing of the garrison of India by second-line troops. In order to hold our unique position in India the troops as well as the officers detailed for duty in that country need to know a good deal of its life and customs, and a proportion of them must speak native languages. In sending large numbers of second-line troops, having no such experience or knowledge, to the great Indian garrisons, the risk was inevitably incurred of friction between the new arrivals and the people of the land. That the relations between the two have been easy and on the whole cordial is eloquent testimony to the discipline, good conduct, and good nature of the troops employed, who have made great sacrifices to join the Army and for whom service in the tropics was an altogether unexpected adventure.

The subsequent participation of Turkey in the war added new problems to the already gigantic task of British Headquarters, but the prompt assistance which Australia and New Zealand was able to afford, and the convenient situation of Egypt as a halfway house between India and England, made it possible, in comparatively short time, to assemble forces for the protection of the Nile Valley which rendered hopeless any attempt of the Turks to invade that country. Nothing is more remarkable than the smoothness, ease, and certainty by which masses of troops were safely transported without a single serious mishap from the utmost ends of the earth to their destination in the theatre of war, and the success of these operations was due in very large measure to the effective action of the fleet, not only in containing and blockading the enormous fighting forces, but in patrolling and guarding the main ocean routes by which not only our troops arrived from the oversea garrisons, but also by which the commerce and food supply of the Island Kingdom were carried on without a single interruption.

It will thus be obvious—and it has, indeed, become clear to most people by this time—that the Germans, thanks to nearly five decades of careful preparation, had many advantages over the Allied Forces which it is desirable to emphasise. Their forces, to begin with, were completely equipped: there was no lack of food, fodder, rifles, cartridges, guns, shells, transport material, or uniforms. All their railways on the Belgian and French frontiers had been constructed with a view to the possibility of a sudden outbreak of war. The placing of the entire Army on a war footing, the filling up of gaps at the front from the reserves, the organisation of the civil life of the community, the regulation of trade, commerce, and finance—these were all matters which had been worked out to the minutest detail years before; and this long theoretical study of war conditions would alone have given the enemy an immense advantage even if the Allies


TO AMIENS-37 MS
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TO REIMS
TO EPERNAY-18 MS
BEAUVAIS
Le Coudray St Germer
Auneuil
Noailles
Mouy
Clermont
Liancourt
Estrees St Denis
Compiegne
FORET DE COMPIEGNE
Pierrefonds
SOISSONS
Vailly
Braisne
Chaumont
Meru
Neuilly en Thelle
Creil
Senlis
Pont Ste Maxence
R. Oise
Crepy
Villers Cotterets
Fere
Oulchy
Neuilly
Betz
Magny en Vexin
Marines
L'Isle-Adam
Luzarches
Nanteuil-le Haudouin
Gandelu
Chateau Thierry
Pontoise
Dammartin en Goele
St Soupplets
Meulan
Ecouen
Montmorency
Gonesse
Meaux
Claye
La Ferte
R. Marne
Conde
ST DENIS
Argenteuil
Poissy
St Germain
Nuisy le Sec
PARIS
Montreuil
Lagny
Crecy
Montmirail
Marly le Roi
Vincennes
Charenton
Rebais
Montenils
Coulommiers
La Ferte Gaucher
VERSAILLES
Corbeil
Villenauxe

[illegible] SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR The Daily Telegraph [illegible]

ALEXANDER GROSS F.R.G.S.

had had longer notice of the imminence of the actual outbreak.

It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that the joint forces of Germany and Austria were able to make rapid progress in the first few weeks of the campaign. While France and Russia were reorganising their Armies and making and cancelling appointments among the higher commands ; while the hastily mobilised Belgian Army was being driven out of its own country by the overwhelming forces opposed to it ; while England was building up an Army and making arrangements for securing her international financial stability, the huge German machine was actually at work. Under what appeared, superficially, to be disadvantageous conditions, the patient organisation of the German Government had for the time being triumphed at both the eastern and western fronts. The close of the first stage of the campaign still sees the Allies engaged in forming or in reconstructing armies, in making almost feverish efforts to secure supplies of munitions, and jointly arranging innumerable details relating to their military arrangements.

APPENDIX

PROCLAMATIONS, SPEECHES, COMMUNIQUÉS, ETC., RELATING TO THE AUGUST (1914) CAMPAIGN

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NOTIFICATION OF STATE OF WAR WITH GERMANY PRINTED IN THE LONDON GAZETTE OF AUGUST 7TH, 1914

" His Majesty's Government informed the German Government on August 4th, 1914, that, unless a satisfactory reply to the request of His Majesty's Government for an assurance that Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium was received by midnight of that day, His Majesty's Government would feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold that neutrality and the observance of a Treaty to which Germany was as much a party as Great Britain.

" The result of this communication having been that His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin had to ask for his passports, His Majesty's Government have accordingly formally notified the German Government that a state of war exists between the two countries as from 11 p.m. to-day.

" Foreign Office,
" *August 4th*, 1914."

PROCLAMATION CALLING OUT NAVAL RESERVES AND NAVAL AND MARINE PENSIONERS

On August 2nd the Admiralty issued the following notice to the Press calling out the reserves on mobilisation :

" The Admiralty have given orders that the following classes of Naval Reserves and Naval and Marine Pensioners shall be called into actual service :

Royal Fleet Reserve, Immediate Class.
Royal Fleet Reserve, Class A.
Royal Fleet Reserve, Class B.
Royal Naval Reserve, all classes (including Trawler Section).
Naval Pensioners.
Marine Pensioners.
Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

" Notice is hereby given by their Lordships that all Naval and Marine Pensioners under the age of fifty-five and all men of the Royal Fleet Reserve and Royal Naval Reserve are to proceed forthwith to the ship or establishment already notified them, or, failing any previous orders, they are to report themselves in person immediately as shown below, viz. :

Naval and Marine Pensioners, including men of Class A, Royal Fleet Reserve	to	Their Pensioner Centre Officer.
Royal Fleet Reserve, Class B	to	The Registrar at their Port of Enrolment.
Royal Fleet Reserve, Immediate Class	to	In accordance with instructions already issued.
Royal Naval Reserve, All Classes	to	The nearest Registrar of Naval Reserve (Superintendent of a Mercantile Marine Office).

" Men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve are *all* to report themselves immediately to their Officer Instructor or Volunteer Mobilising Officer irrespective of whether they have been previously appropriated or not. All men should, if possible, appear in uniform and bring with them their regulation kit, certificate book, or Service certificate, and, in the case of pensioners, their pension identity certificate.

" Men who, through absence at sea or for other unavoidable cause, are unable to join immediately, are to report themselves as soon as possible. Reasonable travelling expenses will be allowed."

TELEGRAMS EXCHANGED BETWEEN KING GEORGE AND THE TSAR OF RUSSIA, MADE PUBLIC AUGUST 5TH

" *Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan* (*St. Petersburg*).

" Foreign Office,
" *August 1st*, 1914, 3.30 *a.m.*

" You should at once apply for an audience with his Majesty the Emperor, and convey to him the following personal message from the King:

" ' My Government has received the following statement from the German Government:

" ' " On July 29th the Russian Emperor requested the German Emperor by telegraph to mediate between Russia and Austria. The Emperor immediately declared his readiness to do so. He informed the Russian Emperor of this by telegraph, and took the required action at Vienna. Without waiting for the result of this action Russia mobilised against Austria. By telegraph the German Emperor pointed out to the Russian Emperor that hereby his attempt at mediation would be rendered illusory. The Emperor further asked the Russian Emperor to suspend the military operations against Austria. This, however, did not happen. In spite of this the German Government continued its mediation in Vienna. In this matter the German Government have gone to the farthest limit of what can be suggested to a Sovereign State which is the ally of Germany. The proposals made by the German Government in Vienna were conceived entirely on the lines suggested by Great Britain, and the German Government recommended them in Vienna for their serious consideration. They were taken into consideration in Vienna this morning. During the deliberations of the (? Austrian) Cabinet, and before they were concluded, the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg reported the mobilisation of the entire Russian Army and Fleet. Owing to this action on the part of Russia, the Austrian answer to the German proposals for mediation, which were still under consideration, was not given. This action on the part of Russia is also directed against Germany—that is to say, the

Power whose mediation had been invoked by the Russian Emperor. We were bound to reply with serious countermeasures to this action, which we were obliged to consider as hostile, unless we were prepared to endanger the safety of our country. We are unable to remain inactive in face of the Russian mobilisation on our frontier. We have therefore informed Russia that, unless she were prepared to suspend within twelve hours the warlike measure against Germany and Austria, we should be obliged to mobilise, and this would mean war. We have asked France if she would remain neutral during a German-Russian war."

" 'I cannot help thinking that some misunderstanding has produced this deadlock. I am most anxious not to miss any possibility of avoiding the terrible calamity which at present threatens the whole world. I therefore make a personal appeal to you to remove the misapprehension which I feel must have occurred, and to leave still open grounds for negotiation and possible peaçe. If you think I can in any way contribute to that all-important purpose, I will do everything in my power to assist in reopening the interrupted conversations between the Powers concerned. I feel confident that you are as anxious as I am that all that is possible should be done to secure the peace of the world.' "

THE TSAR'S REPLY

Reply of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia to His Majesty King George:

"I would gladly have accepted your proposals had not German Ambassador this afternoon presented a note to my Government declaring war. Ever since presentation of the ultimatum at Belgrade, Russia has devoted all her efforts to finding some pacific solution of the question raised by Austria's action. Object of that action was to crush Serbia and make her a vassal of Austria. Effect of this would have been to upset balance of power in Balkans, which is of such vital interest to my Empire. Every proposal, including that of your Government, was rejected by Germany and

Austria, and it was only when favourable moment for bringing pressure to bear on Austria had passed that Germany showed any disposition to mediate. Even then she did not put forward any precise proposal. Austria's declaration of war on Serbia forced me to order a partial mobilisation, though, in view of threatening situation, my military advisers strongly advised a general mobilisation owing to quickness with which Germany can mobilise in comparison with Russia. I was eventually compelled to take this course in consequence of complete Austrian mobilisation, of the bombardment of Belgrade, of concentration of Austrian troops in Galicia, and of secret military preparations being made in Germany. That I was justified in doing so is proved by Germany's sudden declaration of war, which was quite unexpected by me, as I had given most categorical assurances to the Emperor William that my troops would not move so long as mediation negotiations continued.

"In this solemn hour I wish to assure you once more that I have done all in my power to avert war. Now that it has been forced on me, I trust your country will not fail to support France and Russia. God bless and protect you."

CONGRATULATIONS TO KING ALBERT

On August 10th King George sent the following telegram to the King of the Belgians:

"I heartily congratulate you upon the splendid way in which your Army is defending its country and especially on the gallantry displayed against repeated attacks on Liége. You must indeed be proud of your brave troops."

King Albert replied in English as follows:

"Deeply touched by your warm congratulation. I thank you with all my heart and express to you the sincere gratitude of the Belgian Army and nation."

The President of the Russian Duma sent the following telegram to the Belgian Chamber at the same time:

"Great enthusiasm has been caused in the Duma by the splendid and courageous exploits of the brave Belgian Army in the fierce fighting against the German troops. The Duma has charged me to inform the Belgian Chamber that the whole of the Russian people is animated by a similar desire to crush the enemy which has dared to break the European peace and to violate the neutrality of Belgium. At this solemn time the Duma, unanimously united in admiration of the heroism of the Belgian people, prays you to accept its warm salute and the assurance that all the peoples living in Russia fervently wish for the brilliant victory over the attack against right and justice. Long live King Albert! Long live the Chamber of Deputies! Long live the brave Belgian people and the glorious Army!"

WAR WITH AUSTRIA

As a result of conversations between the British and French Governments, the British Government agreed that a state of war between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary should begin as from 12 p.m. on August 12th, 1914.

An Admiralty message to begin hostilities was dispatched.

The following notice was published in a Supplement to *The London Gazette* on August 12th:

"Diplomatic relations between France and Austria being broken off, the French Government have requested his Majesty's Government to communicate to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London the following Declaration:

"Après avoir déclaré la guerre à la Serbie et pris ainsi la première initiative des hostilités en Europe, le Gouvernement austro-hongrois s'est mis, sans aucune provocation du Gouvernement de la République Française, en état de guerre avec la France;

"1°.—Après que l'Allemagne avait successivement déclaré la guerre à la Russie et à la France, il est intervenu dans ce conflit en déclarant la guerre à la Russie qui combattait déjà aux côtés de la France.

"2°.—D'après de nombreuses informations dignes de foi, l'Autriche a envoyé des troupes sur la frontière allemande, dans des conditions qui constituent une menace directe à l'égard de la France.

" En présence de cet ensemble de faits, le Gouvernement français se voit obligé de déclarer au Gouvernement austro-hongrois qu'il va prendre toutes les mesures qui lui permettront de répondre à ces actes et à ces menaces.

" In communicating this Declaration accordingly to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, His Majesty's Government have declared to His Excellency that the rupture with France having been brought about in this way, they feel themselves obliged to announce that a state of war exists between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary as from midnight."

ARRIVAL OF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FRANCE

The following statement was issued by the Press Bureau in the evening of August 17th :

" The Expeditionary Force, as detailed for foreign service, has been safely landed on French soil. The embarkation, transportation, and disembarkation of men and stores were alike carried through with the greatest possible precision and without a single casualty."

Mr. (now Sir) F. E. Smith, who made this announcement, added :

" Lord Kitchener wishes me to add that he and the country are under the greatest obligation to the Press for the loyalty with which all references to the movements of the Expeditionary Force in this country and on their landing have been suppressed.

" Lord Kitchener is well aware that much anxiety must have been caused to the English Press by the knowledge that these matters were being freely described and discussed in the Continental Press ; and he wishes to assure the Press in this country that nothing but his conviction of the military importance to this country of suppressing these movements would have led him to issue instructions which placed the Press of this country under a temporary disadvantage."

MESSAGES TO THE TROOPS FROM KING GEORGE AND LORD KITCHENER

On the occasion of the departure of the Expeditionary Force for France, the King sent to the troops the following message which is here reproduced as issued :

"MESSAGE FROM THE KING.

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

" You are leaving home to fight for the safety and honour of my Empire.

" Belgium, whose country we are pledged to defend, has been attacked and France is about to be invaded by the same powerful foe.

" I have implicit confidence in you my soldiers. Duty is your watchword, and I know your duty will be nobly done.

" I shall follow your every movement with deepest interest and mark with eager satisfaction your daily progress ; indeed your welfare will never be absent from my thoughts.

" I pray God to bless you and guard you and bring you back victorious.

"GEORGE, R.I.

" *August* 9*th*, 1914."

The following instructions were issued by Lord Kitchener to every soldier in the Expeditionary Army, to be kept in his Active Service Pay Book :

" You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy. You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience. Remember that the honour of the British Army depends on your individual conduct.

" It will be your duty not only to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle. The operations in which you are engaged will, for the most part, take place in a friendly country, and you can do your own country no better service than in showing yourself in France and Belgium in the true character of a British soldier.

"Be invariably courteous, considerate, and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with welcome and to be trusted; your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust.

"Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and, while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

"Do your duty bravely,
"Fear God,
"Honour the King.

"KITCHENER,
"*Field-Marshal.*"

MONS AND LORRAINE

The Ministry of War in Paris issued the following communiqué in the evening of August 25th, 1914:

"On the west of the Meuse the English Army, which was on our left, was attacked by the Germans. Its behaviour under fire was admirable, and it resisted the enemy with its customary coolness.

"The French Army which was operating in this region attacked. Our army corps, with the African troops in the first line, carried forward by their over-eagerness, were received with a very murderous fire. They did not fall back, but later by a counter-attack by the Prussian Guard they were forced to retire. They did so only after having inflicted enormous losses on the enemy The flower of the Prussian Guard suffered very severely.

" On the east of the Meuse our troops advanced across very difficult ground. They met with a vigorous attack as they left the woods and were compelled to retire after fierce fighting to the south of Semoy.

" At the order of General Joffre our troops and the English troops have taken up their positions on the covering line, which they would not have quitted had not the splendid courage of the Belgian Army permitted us to enter Belgium. The covering line is intact. Our cavalry has not suffered. Our artillery has proved its superiority. Our officers and soldiers are in splendid physical and moral condition.

" As a result of the orders given the struggle will change its aspect for a few days. The French Army will, for a time, remain on the defensive. When the proper moment comes as chosen by the commander-in-chief, it will resume a vigorous offensive.

" Our losses are severe. It will be premature to estimate them, or to estimate those of the German army, which, however, has suffered so severely as to be compelled to halt in its counter-attack and establish itself in new positions."

The communiqué then proceeds to deal with the situation in regard to Lorraine, and adds :

" Yesterday we four times counter-attacked from the positions we occupied on the north of Nancy, and we inflicted very severe losses on the Germans. Generally speaking, we retain full liberty to use our railway system, and every sea is open for our reprovisioning. Our operations have permitted Russia to enter into action and to reach the heart of Eastern Prussia. It is, of course, regrettable that owing to difficulties in execution which could not have been foreseen our plan of attack has not achieved its object. Had it done so it would have shortened the war ; but in any case our defence remains intact in the face of an already weakened enemy.

" All Frenchmen will deplore the momentary abandonment of the portion of annexed territory which we had already occupied. On the other hand, certain portions of national territory must, unfortunately, suffer from the events of which they will be the theatre. The trial is inevitable, but will be temporary. Thus, some detachments of German cavalry belonging to an independent division operating on the extreme right have penetrated into the Roubaix-Tourcoing district, which is defended only by territorial forces. The courage of our brave people will support this trial with unshaken faith in our final success, which is beyond doubt.

"In telling the country the whole truth, the Government and the military authorities afford it the strongest possible proof of their absolute confidence in a victory which depends only on our tenacity and perseverance."

LORD KITCHENER'S FIRST STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS (AUGUST 25TH, 1914)

Earl Kitchener, who on rising was greeted with cheers from both sides of the House, said:

"As this is the first time I have had the honour of addressing your Lordships, I must ask for the indulgence of the House. In the first place I desire to make a personal statement. Noble lords on both sides of the House doubtless know that, while associating myself in the fullest degree for the prosecution of the war with my colleagues in His Majesty's Government, my position on this bench does not in any way imply that I belong to any political party, for, as a soldier, I have no politics. (Hear, hear.) Another point is that my occupation of the post of Secretary of State for War is a temporary one. The terms of my service are the same as those under which some of the finest portions of our manhood, now so willingly stepping forward to join the colours, are engaging—that is to say, for the war, or if it lasts longer than three years, then for three years. It has been asked why the latter limit has been fixed. It is because should this disastrous war be prolonged—and no one can foretell with any certainty its duration—then after three years' war there will be others fresh and fully prepared to take our places and see this matter through.

"The very serious conflict in which we are now engaged on the Continent has been none of our seeking. It will undoubtedly strain the resources of our Empire and entail considerable sacrifices on our people. These will be willingly borne for our honour and the preservation of our position in the world, and will be shared by our Dominions beyond the seas, now sending contingents and assistance of every kind to help the Mother Country in this struggle. (Cheers.) If I am unable, owing to military consideration for the best interests of the Allied Armies in the field, to speak with much detail on the present situation of our Army on the Continent, I am sure your lordships will pardon me for the necessary restraint which is imposed upon me. (Cheers.)

"The Expeditionary Force has taken the field on the French north-west frontier and advanced to the neighbourhood of Mons in Belgium. Our troops have already been for thirty-six hours in contact with a superior force of German invaders. During that time they have maintained the traditions of British soldiers and have behaved with the utmost gallantry. The movements which they have been called upon to execute have been those which demand the greatest steadiness in the soldiers and skill in their commanders.

"Sir John French telegraphed to me at midnight as follows:

"'In spite of hard marching and fighting the British Force is in the best of spirits.'

"And I replied:

"'Congratulate troops on their splendid work. We are all proud of them.' (Cheers.)

"As your lordships are aware European fighting causes greater casualties than the campaigns in which we are generally engaged in other parts of the world. The nation will, I am sure, be fully prepared to meet whatever losses and sacrifices we may have to make in this war. Sir John French, without having been able to verify the numbers, estimates the loss since the commencement of active operations at rather more than 2,000 men *hors de combat*.

"As to the work of the last few weeks I have to remark that when war was declared mobilisation took place without any hitch whatever, and our Expeditionary Force proved itself wholly efficient, thoroughly well equipped, and immediately ready to take the field. The Press and the public have in their respective spheres lent invaluable aid to the Government in preserving a discreet silence which the exigencies of the situation obviously demanded, and I gladly take this opportunity of bearing testimony to the value of their co-operation. The hands of the military authorities were also strengthened by the readiness with which the civilian community faced and accepted the novel situation created by the issue of requisitions for horses, transports, supplies, and billets. The railway companies in the all-important matter of the transport facilities have more than justified the complete confidence reposed in them by the War Office, all grades of railway services having laboured with untiring energy and patience. And it is well to repeat that the conveyance of our troops across the Channel was accomplished, thanks to the cordial co-operation of the Admiralty, with perfect smoothness and without any untoward incident whatever. (Cheers.)

" We know how deeply the French people appreciate the value of the prompt assistance we have been able to afford them at the very outset of the war; and it is obvious that not only the moral but the material support our troops are now rendering must prove to be a factor of high military significance in restricting the sphere and determining the duration of hostilities. Had the conditions of strategy permitted, every one in this country would have rejoiced to see us ranged alongside the gallant Belgian Army in that superb struggle against desperate odds which has just been witnessed. (Loud cheers.) But, although this privilege was perforce denied to us, Belgium knows of our sympathy with her in her sufferings, of our indignation at the blows which have been inflicted on her, and also of our resolution to make sure that in the end her sacrifices will not have been unavailing.

" While other countries engaged in this war have, under a system of compulsory service, brought their full resources of men into the field, we, under our national system, have not done so, and can therefore still point to a vast reserve drawn from the resources both of the Mother Country and of the British Dominions across the seas. (Cheers.) The response which has already been made by the great Dominions abundantly proves that we did not look in vain to these sources of military strength, and while India, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are all sending us powerful contingents, in this country the Territorials are replying with loyalty to the stern call of duty (cheers), which has come to them with such exceptional force. Sixty-nine battalions have, with fine patriotism, already volunteered for service abroad, and when trained and organised in the larger formations will be able to take their places in the line. The 100,000 recruits for which, in the first place, it has been thought necessary to call have been already practically secured. (Cheers.) This force will be trained and organised in divisions similar to those which are now serving on the Continent. Behind these we have our Reserves. The Special Reserve and the National Reserve have each their own part to play in the organisation of our national defence.

"The Empires with whom we are at war have called to the colours almost their entire male population. The principle we on our part shall observe is this, that while their maximum force undergoes a constant diminution, the reinforcements we prepare shall steadily and increasingly flow out until we have an Army in the field which in numbers not less than in quality will not be unworthy of the power and responsibilities of the British Empire. (Cheers.) I cannot at this stage say what will be the limits of the forces required, or what measures may eventually become necessary to supply and maintain them. The scale of the Field Army which we are now calling into being is large and may rise in the course of the next six or seven months to a total of thirty divisions continually maintained in the field. But if the war should be protracted, and if its fortunes should be varied or adverse, exertions and sacrifices beyond any which have been demanded will be required from the whole nation and Empire, and where they are required we are sure they will not be denied to the extreme needs of the State by Parliament or the people." (Cheers.)

THE "SCRAP OF PAPER"

A Parliamentary Paper [Cd. 7445] was issued on August 27th containing a dispatch from the British Ambassador at Berlin "respecting the rupture of diplomatic relations with the German Government." The dispatch reported the final conversations of the British Ambassador and the German Government, and was as follows:

"*Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey*

"London,
"*August 8th*, 1914.

"Sir,—In accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram of the 4th instant [1] I called upon the Secretary of State that afternoon and inquired, in the name of His Majesty's Government, whether the Imperial Government would refrain from violating Belgian neutrality. Herr von Jagow at once replied that he was sorry to say that his answer must be 'No,' as, in consequence of the German troops having crossed the frontier that morning, Belgian neutrality had been already violated.

"Herr von Jagow again went into the reasons why the Imperial Government had been obliged to take this step—namely, that they had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with the operations and endeavour to strike some decisive blow as early as possible. It was a matter of life and death for them, as if they had gone by the more southern route they could not have hoped, in view of the paucity of roads and the strength of the fortresses, to have got through without formidable opposition, entailing great loss of time. This loss of time would have meant time gained by the Russians for bringing up their troops to the German frontier. Rapidity of action was the great German asset, while that of Russia was an inexhaustible supply of troops. I pointed out to Herr von Jagow that this *fait accompli* of the violation of the Belgian frontier rendered, as he would readily understand, the situation exceedingly grave, and I asked him whether there was not still time to draw back and avoid possible consequences which both he and I would deplore. He replied that, for the reasons he had given me, it was now impossible for them to draw back.

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[1] See "Miscellaneous, No. 6 (1914)," No. 153.

" During the afternoon I received your further telegram of the same date,[1] and, in compliance with the instructions therein contained, I again proceeded to the Imperial Foreign Office and informed the Secretary of State that unless the Imperial Government could give the assurance by twelve o'clock that night that they would proceed no further with their violation of the Belgian frontier and stop their advance, I had been instructed to demand my passports and inform the Imperial Government that His Majesty's Government would have to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany was as much a party as themselves.

" Herr von Jagow replied that to his great regret he could give no other answer than that which he had given me earlier in the day, namely, that the safety of the Empire rendered it absolutely necessary that the Imperial troops should advance through Belgium. I gave His Excellency a written summary of your telegram and, pointing out that you had mentioned twelve o'clock as the time when His Majesty's Government would expect an answer, asked him whether, in view of the terrible consequences which would necessarily ensue, it were not possible even at the last moment that their answer should be reconsidered. He replied that if the time given were even twenty-four hours or more, his answer must be the same. I said that in that case I should have to demand my passports. This interview took place at about seven o'clock.

" In a short conversation which ensued Herr von Jagow expressed his poignant regret at the crumbling of his entire policy and that of the Chancellor, which had been to make friends with Great Britain and then, through Great Britain, to get closer to France. I said that this sudden end to my work in Berlin was to me also a matter of deep regret and disappointment, but that he must understand that under the circumstances and in view of our engagements, His Majesty's Government could not possibly have acted otherwise than they had done.

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[1] See " Miscellaneous, No. 6 (1914)," No. 159.

"I then said that I should like to go and see the Chancellor, as it might be, perhaps, the last time I should have an opportunity of seeing him. He begged me to do so. I found the Chancellor very agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue, which lasted for about twenty minutes. He said that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree; just for a word—'neutrality,' a word which in war time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen.

"I protested strongly against that statement, and said that, in the same way as he and Herr von Jagow wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of 'life and death' for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could any one have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future? The Chancellor said, 'But at what price will that compact have been kept! Has the British Government thought of that?' I hinted to His Excellency as plainly as I could that fear of consequences could hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements, but His Excellency was so excited, so evidently overcome by the news of our action, and so little disposed to hear reason, that I refrained from adding fuel to the flame by further argument.

" As I was leaving he said that the blow of Great Britain joining Germany's enemies was all the greater that almost up to the last moment he and his Government had been working with us and supporting our efforts to maintain peace between Austria and Russia. I said that this was part of the tragedy which saw the two nations fall apart just at the moment when the relations between them had been more friendly and cordial than they had been for years. Unfortunately, notwithstanding our efforts to maintain peace between Russia and Austria, the war had spread and had brought us face to face with a situation which, if we held to our engagements, we could not possibly avoid, and which unfortunately entailed our separation from our late fellow-workers. He would readily understand that no one regretted this more than I.

" After this somewhat painful interview I returned to the Embassy and drew up a telegraphic report of what had passed. This telegram was handed in at the Central Telegraph Office a little before 9 p.m. It was accepted by that office, but apparently never dispatched.[1]

" At about 9.30 p.m. Herr von Zimmermann, the Under-Secretary of State, came to see me. After expressing his deep regret that the very friendly official and personal relations between us were about to cease, he asked me casually whether a demand for passports was equivalent to a declaration of war. I said that such an authority on international law as he was known to be must know as well or better than I what was usual in such cases. I added that there were many cases where diplomatic relations had been broken off and, nevertheless, war had not ensued ; but that in this case he would have seen from my instructions, of which I had given Herr von Jagow a written summary, that His Majesty's Government expected an answer to a definite question by twelve o'clock that night, and that in default of a satisfactory answer they would be forced to take such steps as their engagements required. Herr Zimmermann said that that was, in fact, a declaration of war, as the Imperial Government could not possibly give the assurance required either that night or any other night.

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[1] This telegram never reached the Foreign Office.

" In the meantime, after Herr Zimmermann left me, a flying sheet, issued by the *Berliner Tageblatt*, was circulated stating that Great Britain had declared war against Germany. The immediate result of this news was the assemblage of an exceedingly excited and unruly mob before His Majesty's Embassy. The small force of police which had been sent to guard the Embassy was soon overpowered, and the attitude of the mob became more threatening. We took no notice of this demonstration as long as it was confined to noise, but when the crash of glass and the landing of cobble stones into the drawing-room, where we were all sitting, warned us that the situation was getting unpleasant, I telephoned to the Foreign Office an account of what was happening. Herr von Jagow at once informed the Chief of Police, and an adequate force of mounted police, sent with great promptness, very soon cleared the street. From that moment on we were well guarded, and no more direct unpleasantness occurred.

" After order had been restored Herr von Jagow came to see me, and expressed his most heartfelt regrets at what had occurred. He said that the behaviour of his countrymen had made him feel more ashamed than he had words to express. It was an indelible stain on the reputation of Berlin. He said that the flying sheet circulated in the streets had not been authorised by the Government ; in fact, the Chancellor had asked him to telephone whether he thought that such a statement should be issued, and he had replied, ' Certainly not, until the morning.' It was in consequence of his decision to that effect that only a small force of police had been sent to the neighbourhood of the Embassy, as he had thought that the presence of a large force would inevitably attract attention and perhaps lead to disturbances. It was the ' pestilential *Tageblatt*,' which had somehow got hold of the news, that had upset his calculations. He had heard rumours that the mob had been excited to violence by gestures made and missiles thrown from the Embassy, but he felt sure that

that was not true (I was able soon to assure him that the report had no foundation whatever), and even if it was, it was no excuse for the disgraceful scenes which had taken place. He feared that I would take home with me a sorry impression of Berlin manners in moments of excitement. In fact, no apology could have been more full and complete.

"On the following morning, August 5th, the Emperor sent one of His Majesty's aides-de-camp to me with the following message:

"'The Emperor has charged me to express to Your Excellency his regret for the occurrences of last night, but to tell you at the same time that you will gather from those occurrences an idea of the feelings of his people respecting the action of Great Britain in joining with other nations against her old allies of Waterloo. His Majesty also begs that you will tell the King that he has been proud of the titles of British Field-Marshal and British Admiral, but that in consequence of what has occurred he must now at once divest himself of those titles.'

"I would add that the above message lost none of its acerbity by the manner of its delivery.

"On the other hand, I should like to state that I received all through this trying time nothing but courtesy at the hands of Herr von Jagow and the officials of the Imperial Foreign Office. At about eleven o'clock on the same morning, Count Wedel handed me my passports—which I had earlier in the day demanded in writing—and told me that he had been instructed to confer with me as to the route which I should follow for my return to England. He said that he had understood that I preferred the route *via* the Hook of Holland to that *via* Copenhagen; they had therefore arranged that I should go by the former route, only I should have to wait till the following morning. I agreed to this, and he said that I might be quite assured that there would be no repetition of the disgraceful scenes of the preceding night, as full precautions would be taken. He added that they were doing all in their power to have a restaurant car attached to the train, but it was rather a difficult matter. He also brought me a charming letter from Herr von Jagow, couched in the most friendly terms. The day was passed in packing up such articles as time allowed.

"The night passed quietly without any incident. In the morning a strong force of police was posted along the usual route to the Lehrter Station, while the Embassy was smuggled away in taxi-cabs to the station by side-streets. We there suffered no molestation whatever, and avoided the treatment meted out by the crowd to my Russian and French colleagues. Count Wedel met us at the station to say good-bye on behalf of Herr von Jagow and to see that all the arrangements ordered for our comfort had been properly carried out. A retired colonel of the Guards accompanied the train to the Dutch frontier, and was exceedingly kind in his efforts to prevent the great crowds which thronged the platforms at every station where we stopped from insulting us; but beyond the yelling of patriotic songs and a few jeers and insulting gestures we had really nothing to complain of during our tedious journey to the Dutch frontier.

"Before closing this long account of our last days in Berlin I should like to place on record and bring to your notice the quite admirable behaviour of my staff under the most trying circumstances possible. One and all, they worked night and day with scarcely any rest, and I cannot praise too highly the cheerful zeal with which counsellor, naval and military attachés, secretaries, and the two young attachés buckled to their work and kept their nerve with often a yelling mob outside and inside hundreds of British subjects clamouring for advice and assistance. I was proud to have such a staff to work with, and feel most grateful to them all for the invaluable assistance and support, often exposing them to considerable personal risk, which they so readily and cheerfully gave to me.

"I should also like to mention the great assistance rendered to us all by my American colleague, Mr. Gerard, and his staff. Undeterred by the hooting and hisses with which he was often greeted by the mob on entering and leaving the Embassy, His Excellency came repeatedly to see me to ask how he could help us and to make arrangements for the safety of stranded British subjects. He extricated many of these from extremely difficult situations at some personal risk to himself, and his calmness and *savoir-faire* and his firmness in dealing with the Imperial authorities gave full assurance that the protection of British subjects and interests could not have been left in more efficient and able hands.

"I have, etc.,
"W. E. GOSCHEN."

INDIAN TROOPS FOR THE FRONT

When the House of Lords met on August 28th, Earl Kitchener said:

"We learn to-day from Sir John French that in the fighting which took place between his Army and the enemy on Wednesday, and which was, as appears in the official French report, in the neighbourhood of Cambrai-Le Cateau, our troops were exposed to the attack of five German army corps, two cavalry divisions, and a reserve corps with the Guard Cavalry and the Second Cavalry Division. Our Second Army Corps and Fourth Division bore the brunt of the cavalry attack, whilst our First Army Corps was attacked on the right and inflicted very heavy loss on the enemy. I regret to say that our casualties were heavy. Exact particulars are not yet known. The behaviour of the troops was in all respects admirable. General Joffre, in a message published this morning, has conveyed his congratulations and sincere thanks for the protection so effectively given by our Army to the French flank."

His Lordship then added:

"In addition to the reinforcements which will shortly proceed from this country the Government have decided that our Army in France shall be increased by two divisions and a cavalry division, besides other troops, from India. (Cheers.) The first division of these troops is now on its way. I may add that the wastage in the Army in France is being immediately filled up and that there are 12,000 men waiting for that purpose on the lines of communication."

The Marquess of Lansdowne said:

"The House will have heard with much interest the statement of the Secretary of State for War. We rejoice to hear once again from the lips of the noble and gallant field-marshal his testimony to the gallantry of our troops in exceptionally trying circumstances during the last three or four days. With regard to the announcement of further reinforcements to be sent to the seat of war, I need not say that as far as it is in our power to give support to His Majesty's Government in this matter they can depend upon its being given. Whatever measures they may consider indispensable for maintaining the credit of this country will have all the encouragement which we can give."

The Marquess of Crewe afterwards said:

"As Secretary of State for India, perhaps I may say a word with regard to the dispatch of two Indian divisions and a cavalry division to the seat of war in Europe. It has been deeply impressed upon us by what we have heard from India that the wonderful wave of enthusiasm and loyalty now passing over that country is to a great extent based upon the desire of the Indian people that Indian soldiers should stand side by side with their comrades of the British Army in repelling the invasion of our friends' territory and the attack made upon Belgium. It is well known in India that the African troops of the French Army which have been assisting the troops in France are of native origin, and I feel satisfied that it would be a disappointment to our loyal Indian fellow-subjects, all the more on that account, if they found themselves debarred for any reason from taking part in the campaign on the continent of Europe. We shall find our Army there reinforced by soldiers, high-souled men of first-rate training and representing an ancient civilisation; and we feel certain that if they are called upon they will give the best possible account of themselves side by side with our British troops in encountering the enemy. I venture to think that this keen desire of our Indian fellow-subjects so to co-operate with us is not less gratifying than the same desire which has been shown by the various self-governing Dominions, some of whose soldiers in due course will also be found fighting side by side with British troops and Indian troops in this war.

“ Of course we all know that India does not possess an inexhaustible reservoir of troops, and that the defence of India must be the primary consideration not merely to India itself, but also to us. But I am able to say that, so far as external aggression is concerned—of which I hope and believe there is no prospect—our Indian frontiers will be held fully and adequately secured, in spite of these heavy drafts on the Indian Army. As regards any risk of internal trouble in India, against which in ordinary times, of course, our combined British and Indian forces have to secure us, I believe that at this moment the general enthusiasm which has been awakened by our resistance to the unprovoked attack which has been made upon our Allies is such as to render anything of that sort altogether impossible. (Hear, hear.) That enthusiasm has pervaded all classes and races in India; it has found vent in many different ways—in some cases by gifts of great liberality for the service of the troops in the field. I was told only yesterday by the Viceroy that one of the principal Indian Princes had sent him some 50 lakhs of rupees, or between £300,000 and £400,000, for the use of the troops in the field, and there have been a number of offers of the same kind. I feel confident, therefore, that the action we have taken will meet with the most enthusiastic reception in India, and I believe it will be approved by your lordships' House and by the nation generally.” (Cheers.)

FRANCE'S CHANGE OF CAPITAL

The President of the Republic and the members of the Government left Paris in the evening of September 3rd for Bordeaux. Before leaving, the Government issued the following proclamation:

“ People of France!

“ For several weeks relentless battles have engaged our heroic troops and the army of the enemy. The valour of our soldiers has won for them, at several points, marked advantages; but in the north the pressure of the German forces has compelled us to fall back.

" This situation has compelled the President of the Republic and the Government to take a painful decision.

" In order to watch the national welfare it is the duty of the public powers to remove themselves temporarily from the city of Paris.

" Under the command of an eminent Chief, a French Army, full of courage and zeal, will defend the capital and its patriotic population against the invader.

" But the war must be carried on at the same time on the rest of its territory.

" Without peace or truce, without cessation or faltering, the struggle for the honour of the nation and the reparation of violated right must continue.

" None of our armies is impaired. If some of them have sustained very considerable losses, the gaps have immediately been filled up from the reserves, and the appeal for recruits assures us of new reserves in men and energy to-morrow.

" Endure and fight! Such must be the motto of the Allied British, Russian, Belgian, and French Armies.

" Endure and fight, while at sea the British aid us, cutting the communication of our enemy with the world.

" Endure and fight, while the Russians continue to advance to strike the decisive blow at the heart of the German Empire.

" It is the duty of the Government of the Republic to direct this stubborn resistance.

" Everywhere Frenchmen will rise for their independence; but to ensure the utmost spirit and efficacy in the formidable fight it is indispensable that the Government shall remain free to act.

" At the request of the military authorities, the Government is therefore temporarily transferring its headquarters to a place where it can remain in constant touch with the whole of the country.

" It requests members of Parliament not to remain away from it, in order that they may form, with their colleagues, a bond of national unity.

" The Government only leaves Paris after having assured the defence of the city and of the entrenched camp by every means in its power.

" It knows that it does not need to recommend to the admirable population of Paris that calm, resolution, and coolness which it is showing every day, and which is on a level with its highest traditions.

" People of France, let us all be worthy of these tragic circumstances. We shall gain the final victory ; we shall gain it by unflagging will, endurance, and tenacity.

" A nation which refuses to perish, and which, in order to live, does not flinch either from suffering or sacrifice, is sure of victory."

The manifesto was signed by President Poincaré and all the Ministers.

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